LECTURES

ON

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

BY THE LATE

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The following Lectures on Ecclesiastical History are an important branch of a course of Theological Lectures, originally delivered in Marischal College, Aberdeen, to the students of Divinity in that University. For more than the last twenty years of the Author's life, he devoted the greater part of his time to his Lectures delivered to the Students of Divinity, and those contained in the present volume, and now offered to the Public, were considered as the most important and entertaining of the whole. He had transcribed and revised them, and was every season making considerable amendments and additions to the Work. The Publication has been called for, by the Students and others, with an eagerness which of late has seldom attended the appearance of a theological piece. Those who are acquainted with the other works of Dr. Campbell, will naturally expect in these Lectures something of that clearness of apprehension, and acuteness of investigation, so conspicuously displayed in the Dissertation on Miracles, in answer to David Hume, Esq. nor will they be disappointed. And such as understand the subject, will admire the Doctor's well-

digested learning, and easily discover the importance of a correct historical deduction of the progress of church power, the establishment of a hierarchy, and how clear and decisive it is, in all that may be termed the hinge of the controversy between what has been denominated high church and others. Very seldom, indeed, has the subject been treated with the ability, impartiality, and moderation, which characterize the following pages.

CONTENTS.

LECTURE I.

THE SACRED HISTORY.

LECTURE II.

LECTURE III.

LECTURE IV.

LECTURE V.

LECTURE VI.

LECTURE VII.

LECTURE VIII.

LECTURES IX, X.

LECTURE XI.

LECTURE XII.

LECTURE XIII.



LECTURES

ON

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

LECTURE I.

THE SACRED HISTORY.

I INTEND that the subject of the present, and some succeeding Lectures, shall be the Sacred History, the first branch of the theoretic part of the theological course which claims the attention of the student. This is subdivided into two parts: the first comprehends the events which preceded the Christian æra; the second, those which followed. The first, in a looser way of speaking, is included under the title of Jewish History: the second is what is commonly denominated Church History, or Ecclesiastic History.—I say, in a looser way of speaking, the first is included under the title of the Jewish History: for, in strictness of speech, it compriseth several most important events, which happened long before the existence of the nation of the Jews. Such are the creation of the world, the fall of man, the universal deluge, the dispersion of the human race, the call of Abraham, and those promises which gave to man the early hope of restoration. But as all the credible information we have on these topics is from the Jews, and intimately connected with their history, and as little or no light can be derived from the Pagan histories, or rather fables, that have a relation to ages so remote, it hath not been judged necessary to have a regard to these in the general division. It seemed more natural and commodious to allow all that part of sacred history which preceded the commencement of the Christian church, to come under the common name of Jewish.

Need any arguments be used in order to evince that every theological student should make this, at least as far as the Biblical records bring us, a particular object of his application? In every view we can take of the subject it is suitable; in some it is even necessary. Let it be observed, that all the articles of our faith may be divided into three classes. Some may not improperly be denominated philosophical, some historical, and some prophetical. Of the first kind, the philosophical, are those which concern the divine nature and perfections; those also which concern human nature, its capacities and duties: of the second kind, the historical, are those which relate to the creation, the fall, the deluge, the Mosaic dispensation, the promises, the incarnation of the Messiah, his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, the descent of the Holy Spirit, the mission of the apostles, and the several purposes which, by these means, it pleased the divine Providence to effectuate: of the third, or the prophetical kind, are those which regard events yet future, such as the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the human race, the general judgment, eternity, heaven, and hell. As therefore a considerable portion of the Christian faith consists in points of an historic nature, it must be of consequence for elucidating these, to be acquainted with those collateral events, if I may so express myself, which happen to be connected with any of them by the circumstances of time and place.

But this knowledge is of importance to us, not only for the illustration of the Christian doctrine, but for its confirmation also. When the religion of Christ was first promulgated throughout the world, as the difficulties it had to encounter would have been absolutely insurmountable, had no other than ordinary and human means been employed in its favour, it pleased God, by an extraordinary interposition of Providence, in the gift of miraculous powers, to ensure success to this great design, in defiance of all the powers of the earth combined against it. But no sooner was the strength of the opposition broken, insomuch that the friends and the enemies of Christ came, if I may so express myself, to stand on even ground, than it pleased heaven to withdraw those supernatural aids, and leave this cause to force its way in the world by its own intrinsic and

external evidence. I would not by this be understood to insinuate that the Christian cause hath not always been under the protection of a special and over-ruling providence. I would not be understood to signify, that any external means whatever could have given to our religion its full effect on the hearts and consciences of men, without the internal influences of the Divine Spirit. I only mean to observe to you, what was certainly the fact, that, when matters came to be thus balanced between faith and unbelief, outward miracles and prodigies were not judged, by the Supreme Disposer of all events, to be any longer necessary for silencing gainsayers, and for reaching conviction to the understanding.

That the power of working miracles did at first accompany the publication of the gospel by the apostles, we have at this day the strongest evidence,—as from other sources, so especially from the success of their preaching, which without this help, would be utterly unaccountable, and in direct contradiction to all the laws of probability hitherto known in the world. For, not to mention the inveterate prejudices arising from immemorial opinions and practices, as well as from mistaken interest, which the first preachers of Christianity had to encounter; not to mention the universal contempt and detestation wherein the nation to which they belonged was holden, both by the Greeks and by the Romans; not to mention the apparent ridicule and absurdity there was in exhibiting to the world, as a saviour and mediator with God, a Jew, who had been ignominiously crucified as a malefactor by a Roman procurator;—how inconceivably unequal must have been the combat, when on the one side were power, rank, opulence, birth, learning, and art; and on the other side, weakness, dependance, poverty, obscurity, and illiterate simplicity. The success of the last, in a warfare so disproportionately matched, is an irrefragable demonstration, that the work was not of man, but of God. But as the conviction we have of the reality of those events, and of the means by which they were effected, is derived to us through the channel of testimony, it behoves us to be as careful as possible, in order that the evidence may have its full effect upon us, that we be rightly informed, both as to the nature of the testimony itself, and as to the character and capacity of the witnesses.

This is one consideration, which immediately affects the evidence of the Christian revelation.

Again, as the last mentioned dispensation is erected on the Mosaical, the divine origin of which it every where pre-supposeth; whatever affects the credibility of the latter, will unquestionably affect the credibility of the former; whatever tends to subvert the basis, tends of necessity to overturn the superstructure; and, on the contrary, when once the connection between the two establishments, the Mosaic and the Christian, is thoroughly understood, whatever tends to confirm the one, tends also, though more indirectly, to confirm the other. This reflection naturally leads us to carry our researches further back, and endeavour, as much as possible, to get acquainted with all those circumstances and events which can throw any light upon the scripture history.

But it may be objected, that if all this were necessary to confirm our faith in the gospel, what would be the case of the bulk of mankind, who, by reason of the time they must employ in earning a subsistence, have no leisure for such inquiries; and, by reason of the education they have received, are not in a capacity of making them? To this objection a twofold answer may be returned: first, such inquiries are not necessary to the man, who, through want of education and of time, is incapacitated for prosecuting them. Those very wants, which unfit him for the study, are his great security that he shall have no occasion for it. The man of letters, on the contrary, whose time is much at his own disposal, is daily exposed, especially in this age and country, both from reading and from conversation, to meet with objections against revealed religion, which the other has no probability of ever hearing; and which, if he should by any accident come to hear, it is a thousand to one he does not understand. As our resources, therefore, ought to be in proportion to our needs, and as our means and methods of defence ought to be adapted to the particular ways wherein we are liable to be attacked, there is a peculiar reason which men of letters have for entering so far at least into these inquiries, as to be acquainted with both sides of the question, and to be equitable judges between the friends and the enemies of the gospel. There is also another reason, which ought to

determine those in particular who have the holy ministry in view. It is their business, and therefore in a special manner their duty, to be furnished, as much as possible, for removing not only their own doubts, but the doubts of other people. It is their province to support the weak, to confirm the doubting, and to reclaim the strayed. In spiritual matters, especially, they ought to serve as eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame.

But further; the knowledge of the sacred history is not only of importance for illustrating the truths of our religion, and for strengthening the evidences of its divinity, but also in the way of ornament and recommendation to the ministerial character. Nor let it be imagined that this is a matter of little moment. It will not require an uncommon share of penetration to discover, that this, on the contrary, is a matter of the greatest consequence. Whatever tends to adorn the character of a pastor, and render him respectable, is sure of procuring him in general a more favourable reception with mankind. When he speaks, he commands a closer attention, which gives double weight to every thing he says. It is this respect to superiority in knowledge and discernment, which makes, as Job poetically expresseth it, even princes refrain talking, and the nobles lay their hand upon their mouth. The utility of every such qualification, as serves to attract this veneration, will be readily acknowledged by all who are duly sensible how great a point in instructing is carried, when the people to be instructed are induced seriously to attend, to think, to feel.

Thus much shall suffice for what regards the propriety of the study, and the several purposes of illustrating, confirming, and recommending our religion, which it is fitted to serve.—Let us next inquire into the manner in which we may hope successfully to prosecute it. And here I beg leave to take notice, by the way, that it is not my intention, either on this, or any other branch of the theological science, or on what more immediately regards the pastoral care, to recommend to your perusal a multitude of books. Nothing could be easier for one who has the honour to give lessons in theology, than to present the students with a long catalogue of authors, who have, with some reputation, treated the various topics to be studied. Ye might get in one half hour the titles of more volumes, than a whole

lifetime would suffice you to read over. There are several reasons which induce me to be rather sparing on this article. In the first place, there is, in the practice of accumulating the names of books and authors, adding volume to volume, and folio to folio, something very forbidding, which tends greatly to dishearten the young learner. The labour appears immense, and the difficulties insuperable. The toils he hath to undergo, and the obstacles he hath to surmount, are all set full in his view; and that before he is made so sensible of the charms of the pursuit, as to be heartily engaged in it, and animated to persist, in defiance of every thing that might discourage or oppose him. The conduct of nature, in this respect, is more worthy of imitation. She commonly renders the first difficulty a screen, by which the second is concealed from sight; the second answers the same purpose to the third, and so forwards. In travelling over a ridge of mountains, like the Alps or Pyrenees, every summit the traveller approaches he imagines to be the highest; and it is not till he has reached it, that he is sensible he must climb still higher. And this is what will happen to him for several successive times. Now there is this advantage in this gradual opening of the scene, that the time he has already spent, and the difficulties he hath already overcome, prove the most cogent arguments with him, not to lose his past time and labour by giving over the pursuit. The farther he advances, these arguments have the greater weight. And thus, by the help of a growing zeal and perseverance, a man will, with honour and advantage, come off victorious in an enterprise, which, had he seen from the beginning all its difficulty, he had never undertaken.

A second reason for using this method is, the great variety of studies in which the divine, as ye have seen, must necessarily be conversant. None of them can, without hurt both to his reputation and usefulness, be entirely neglected. Now, the greater diversity there is of subjects in this study, the more the inquiry into each ought to be simplified, that the young student may neither be perplexed, and as it were lose himself in a cumbersome multiplicity; nor so attach himself to one part of the study, as to swallow up all the time that should be employed on the other parts. He ought to be introduced

into every province of this extensive country: the most patent roads should be pointed out to him: a perfect acquaintance with each must be the work of time, and the fruit of his own assiduity and labour. Or, dropping the metaphor: of every separate article of this study, he ought, in the schools of divinity, to acquire some general notions; but to attain a thorough proficiency in them all, is rather the business of a life-time, than the effect of a few years application. It is indeed in this, as in every other art or science, the foundation only is laid at school,—the manner of building is indicated; the scholar may afterwards rear the superstructure as high as his disposition and opportunities shall enable him. Now it is my design here, rather to lay a wide foundation, on which a goodly edifice may in time be erected, though I should make but little or no progress in raising the walls; than on a narrow bottom, to advance farther in the building; because, in this case, the fabric, though it be raised ever so high, must, by reason of the straitened limits to which its foundation does necessarily confine it, be both mean and incommodious.

I shall assign a third reason for not harassing my hearers, by recommending a great variety of books. Young people are but too apt to imagine, that learning and reading are synonymous terms, and that a man is always the more learned the more he has read. Nothing can be a more egregious mistake. Food is necessary for the support of the body, and without a competency of it we could not enjoy either vigour or health; but we should not suspect him to be overstocked with wisdom, who should conclude from this concession, that the more a man eats, the more healthy and vigorous he must be. We know from experience, that when a certain proportion is exceeded, those corporeal endowments, health and strength, are impaired by the very means which, if used in moderation, would have increased them. The same thing exactly holds with reading, which is the food of the mind. The memory may be loaded and encumbered in the one case, as the stomach is in the other. And in either case, if we take more than we can digest, it can never turn to good account. There have been instances of such *helluones librorum*, such book-gluttons, as very much resembled the lean kine in Pharaoh's vision, which, when they had de-

voured the fat and well-favoured kine, were themselves as lean and ill-favoured as before. It is indeed necessary that we accustom ourselves to read; but it is likewise necessary, and much more difficult, that we accustom ourselves to reflect. There ought to be stated times for both exercises; but to the last, particularly, our best endeavours ought frequently to be directed. And for this purpose, I know no better helps, than to be obliged, sometimes by conversation, sometimes by composing, to express our sentiments on the subjects of which we read. The use which the student makes of the food of the mind, bears the closest analogy to the use which the ruminating animals make of their pasture. They recall it, and enjoy it a second time to much greater advantage than the first. Resemble them in this particular,—on whatever yo find instructive often ruminate.

The fourth and last reason I shall mention is, when a number of books on every topic are recommended, the student finds it, I say, not difficult but, impossible, to get them all, or even the greater part of them. Fruitless endeavours, often repeated, will in time extinguish the greatest ardour; and from finding part of our task impracticable, we are but too apt to grow careless about the whole. A few directions exactly followed, are more conducive to our improvement, than a much greater number little minded.

But to return from this, which will possibly be looked on as a digression; the first thing I would earnestly recommend, in order to your acquiring the knowledge of the Old Testament history, is the frequent and attentive perusal of the Old Testament itself. Let not this recommendation, far the most important I can give, be the more lightly esteemed by any of you, because it is a book so common, a book which all men, learned and unlearned, have access to. Are not the greatest blessings always the commonest? Such is the sun, that glorious luminary which enlightens us, the earth which we inhabit, and the air which we breathe. Or are these invaluable benefits the less regarded by the pious and judicious, because of their commonness? Indeed it may be thought, that ever so great proficiency in the knowledge of a book which is in every body's hands, can never procure a man the envied character of erudition. True;

but, on the other hand, will not that very circumstance of its universality, justly fix the brand of ignorance on him, in whom there appears, in this respect, a remarkable deficiency? Besides, to be ignorant in one's own profession, is always accounted a matter of the greatest reproach: the divine is, by profession, an interpreter of Scripture; therefore, to be deficient here, is the most unpardonable kind of ignorance. I am the more particular on this point, because, by a very common tendency in our nature, what we think we have it in our power to do at any time, we are apt, by perpetually procrastinating, to leave undone at last.

But, it may be asked, in what manner shall we read this book most profitably for the attaining of a thorough acquaintance with the history it contains? For this purpose, I would humbly suggest to you some such method as the following: It will require but a superficial notion of the whole to be able to distinguish the most remarkable epochs in sacred history; let these be marked for heads of study at different times. It is not a matter of great consequence whether, in the division ye make, ye consider most the celebrity of the æra at which the period terminates, or what will nearly produce an equal division of the subject. Let the first epoch, for example, be from the creation till the call of Abraham; the second, from that period till Jacob's journey into Egypt; the third, till the deliverance from Egypt, by the passing through the Red Sea, and the extinction of Pharaoh's host; the fourth, till the death of Moses; the fifth, till the death of Joshua; the sixth, till the commencement of the Israelitish monarchy; the seventh, till the defection of the ten tribes from Rehoboam; the eighth, till the captivity, and the ninth, till the restoration of the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin. Let the student, first, attentively read over so much of the sacred volume as contains the account of one period; let him then lay by the book, and write in his own style and manner, an abstract, or abridgement, of the narrative he has read, carefully noting all the memorable events, and interspersing such remarks of his own, as he shall judge to arise naturally out of the subject. After finishing one epoch, let him proceed in the same manner to the succeeding epoch. By this method, he will fix in his mind the sacred his-

tory more effectually than it could be done by twenty readings.

Besides, there are several other very considerable advantages which will redound from this plan regularly prosecuted. First, the student will acquire a habit of reading with greater attention, having close in his view the use he must make of what he reads, immediately after reading; secondly, he will find this practice an excellent exercise of memory, and one of the best methods of strengthening it; thirdly, it will produce in him a habit of reflection; fourthly, as it will render composition habitual to him, there is not an expedient that I know of, which will contribute more to give him a readiness of writing his sentiments on any subject with a natural facility, and perspicuity of expression.

Permit me to add a few more directions for assisting you in the prosecution of the plan proposed. In periods, of which an account is given by more than one of the inspired historians, it will be proper to read both accounts, and compare them together; those, for example, given in the books of Kings, and in the books of Chronicles, before ye begin to compose the intended abstract. It will not be improper to join, in like manner, the reading of the prophets, with those parts of the history which relate to the times wherein they lived. The historians, and the prophets, will often be found to reflect light upon each other. As to other helps, the chief I would recommend to you is Josephus, the Jewish historian; and the best way of studying him, as I imagine, is carefully to read his relation of every particular epoch, immediately after perusing the account of it given by the inspired penmen of the Old Testament, as far as their history extends. Both may be read previously to the attempt of forming a narrative of the different periods, as mentioned above. In this there will be a two-fold advantage; first, by the double representation of the facts, there is a probability they will be more deeply rooted in the memory; secondly, by the diversity of manner in which the same things are told, a fuller view is given of the subject, and the reader's own manner is better secured against too close an imitation of either.

Before I conclude this lecture, allow me to subjoin a few re-

marks in regard to the character of that historian, and the credit that is due to him. That he was a man, who, to a considerable degree of eminence in the Jewish erudition of those days, added a tolerable share of Greek and Roman literature, is a character which, in my opinion, cannot justly be refused him. As a compiler of history, it must be admitted, that in every instance in which his account, on a fair examination, is found to contradict the account given in holy writ, he is entitled to no faith at all. In cases wherein he may be said not to contradict scripture, but to differ considerably from it, by the detail of additional circumstances, it will be proper to distinguish between the earlier ages of his history and the later ages. With regard to the first, we are sure that he had no other authentic records to draw his information from, than those we have at this day in our hands. These are Moses, and those prophets, who came nearest to the time of that lawgiver. With regard to the last, though within the æra of the Old Testament history, we are not so certain that he might not have had the assistance of credible annals extant in his time, though now lost. There are two things, however, in his character, that affect his manner of writing, and require a particular attention: one is, too close an affectation of the manner of the Greek historians. This appears, as in the general tenor of his style, so especially in the endeavours he uses to embellish his narration with long speeches, which he puts in the mouths of the persons introduced, a silly device for displaying the talents and eloquence of the writers, rather than of the historical characters. I cannot help taking notice of one instance, in which, through an ill-judged attempt to improve and adorn, he hath spoiled, one of the finest speeches in all the history. The speech I mean, is that of Judah to his brother Joseph, then governor of Egypt, offering to ransom his brother Benjamin, by the sacrifice of his own liberty. It is impossible for any one, whose taste can relish genuine simple nature, not to be deeply affected with that speech as it is in the Pentateuch. On reading it, we are perfectly prepared for the effect which it produced on his unknown brother. We see, we feel, that it was impossible for humanity, for natural affection, to hold out longer. In Josephus, it is a very different kind of

performance: something so cold, so far-fetched, so artificial, both in sentiments and in language, that it savours more of one who had been educated in the schools of the Greek sophists, than of those plain, artless, patriarchal shepherds.

The other thing that deserves our notice in this author, is the excessive fear he had of exposing himself to the ridicule of his Greek and Roman readers, whose favour he very assiduously courts. This hath made him express himself on some points with such apparent scepticism, as hath induced many to think, that he was not a firm believer in his own religion. But this, on a closer examination, will be found entirely without foundation: on the contrary, he piques himself not a little, on the distinction of his nation from all others, by the knowledge and worship of the true God. But he did not write his history to make proselytes, and therefore chose to put on those parts of his work which he thought would expose him most to the sneer of the infidel, such a gloss as would make it pass more easily with Gentile, and even with philosophical readers, (for he had an eye to both) amongst whom we know the Jews were branded with credulity, even to a proverb. It may be thought indeed, that with regard to the more ancient part of his history, as nothing in point of fact can be got from it, which is not to be learnt from the Bible, that part, at least, can be of little or no service to Christians. But even this conclusion would not be just. As the historian himself was a Pharisee, a contemporary of the apostles, and one who lived till after the destruction of the Jewish temple and polity by Titus Vespasian, we may reap instruction even from his errors. They will serve to shew, what were the tenets of the sect at that time, what were their notions both concerning historical events, and sacred institutions, and what were some of their principal traditions. All this to the Christian divine is a matter of no little consequence for the elucidation of several passages in the New Testament, which allude to such erroneous sentiments, and vain traditions. From the time of the rebuilding of the temple under Ezra, to its final demolition, and the total extinction of the Jewish government by the Romans, Josephus alone affords almost all the light we have.

The two books of Maccabees are the only other ancient mo-

numents now extant of the transactions of that people within the aforesaid period. These books, though they are not acknowledged by Protestants to be canonical scripture, very well deserve your attention as historical tracts of considerable antiquity, and, to all appearance, worthy of credit. We have, indeed, in English, an excellent work of Prideaux, called, The Connection of the Old Testament history with that of the New, which I would also earnestly recommend to your perusal. I hope I scarcely need to mention, that it is more proper for the student to read Josephus in his own language than in a translation: it will thus answer a double end, as an exercise in Greek as well as in history.

To the knowledge of the sacred, it will be found proper to add as much at least of profane history, as is most nearly connected with it, and may serve to throw some light upon it, together with a little of the chronology and the geography of the times and the countries about which the history is conversant. The connection which the four great monarchies, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman, have with the Jewish history, is manifest; but as to these, it is by no means requisite that, in this place, I should be particular. The Jewish history is necessary to the theologian, the others are useful. The former ought to be begun immediately, the latter should be studied afterwards, as ye find leisure and opportunity: but we do not incline to embarrass you with a needless multiplicity of directions.

In the next prelection I intend to begin with some observations on the history of the sacred canon.

LECTURE II.

THE subject of this day's discourse is, as I hinted to you at a former meeting, some observations on the nature and utility of the history of the sacred canon; to which I shall add some reflections, tending to explain both the origin and the character of that species of history which is denominated ecclesiastical. As to the history of the canon, it will be proper, in the first place, to give an explanation of the phrase. That book which we Christians denominate *the Bible*, 'η βιβλος, the book, by way of eminence, and which is also termed the *canon*, and *the sacred canon*, comprehends a considerable number of treatises, or pieces totally distinct, composed (for the most part) at periods distant from one another, and in sundry places, written by diverse penmen, on different subjects, and in various styles: nor were they all originally in the same language. The greater part of the books which compose the Old Testament, are in Hebrew, a small part in Chaldee, and all the books of the New Testament in Greek; at least, if the originals of any of them were in another tongue, they are not now extant: some are in prose, and others in verse; some are historical, some juridical, and some prophetical; some instruct us by the way of simple narrative; some are written in a highly figurative and allegoric diction; some in a vehement and declamatory; others address us in a free epistolary strain: one piece is a collection of devotional hymns and prayers, another is an assemblage of moral maxims and observations. The name *canon*, in like manner as the word *Bible*, we have borrowed from the Greek. The term κανων, with them, signifies *rule*, or *standard*. Now the Scriptures are thus denominated as being eminently the great rule or standard to the Christian, in all that concerns both faith and manners. Hence also those writings, of whose authenticity and inspiration there is sufficient evidence, are termed *canonical scripture*.

Now concerning the several books of which the Bible is composed, a number of questions naturally arise in the mind of the inquisitive student. Such are the following: Who were the writers and compilers, and at what periods, in what places, and on what occasions, were the writings and compilations made? Whence arises that authority they have so generally obtained? Has this been an immediate, or a gradual, consequence of their publication? Has the Christian world been unanimous in this respect, in regard to all these books, or has it been divided, as to all, or any of them? And, if divided, what have been the most cogent arguments on the different sides? How, by whom, where, and when, were they collected into one volume? What hath been their fate and reception since? What have been the most remarkable editions and translations they have undergone? What the variations occasioned by these, and what the most eminent paraphrases and commentaries they have given rise to? I would not be understood by this enumeration, as meaning to insinuate, that all these questions are of the same importance. There is a manifest and very considerable difference among them in this respect. A succinct account, however, of all the facts, which would serve for a solution to the several queries above-mentioned, those at least which are of principal moment to the theologian, would constitute what is commonly called the history of the sacred canon.

The utility of such inquiries to the theologian is the point which naturally comes next to be discussed. As the questions themselves are pretty different in their nature, however much connected by their concurrence in composing the history of the Bible, the purposes they are fitted to answer are also different. In order to prevent mistakes, let it be observed once for all, that by the history of the Bible, I do not here mean, the history contained in the Bible, but the history of the compilement, and of the various fates of the book so denominated. The same thing may be said of that synonymous phrase, the history of the canon. As to those queries which regard the origin of the sacred books, they are chiefly conducive for confirming the truth of our religion; and as to those which regard their reception, good or bad, with all the consequences it hath

produced, they are chiefly conducive for illustrating its doctrines. I use the word *chiefly* in both cases, because, in inquiries into the origin of the scriptures, discoveries will sometimes be made, which serve to illustrate and explain the meaning of things contained in them; and, on the other hand, in inquiries into their reception, with its consequences, we shall often be enabled to discover the grounds of the favourable reception they have met with, and thereby to trace the vestiges of a divine original. To the former class belong questions like these: Who were the writers? When, where, for whose use, and to what purpose were they written? Whence arises the veneration they have drawn? Why, by whom, and on what occasion or occasions, were they collected? To the latter class belong the following: In what manner have they been received in different countries, and at different periods? To what causes does the reception, whether good or bad, appear imputable? What are the most eminent editions? What are the principal variations to be found in the editions and manuscripts, still extant? What translators and commentators have been occupied in conveying and illustrating their doctrine to the most remote nations and distant ages?—In the discussion of such questions, especially in what regards the books of the New Testament, there arises a number of curious investigations, tending to discriminate the genuine productions of the authors, whose names they bear, from the spurious pieces ascribed to them; the authentic dictates of the Holy Spirit, from those which, at most, can only be styled apocryphal, that is, hidden or doubtful. That the church was early pestered with a multitude of fictitious accounts of the life of Christ, and the labours of his apostles, is manifest not only from the concurrent testimony of all antiquity, but even from the introduction which the evangelist Luke hath given to his Gospel: "Forasmuch," says he, "as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us." It is universally acknowledged, that John's Gospel was not written till a considerable time afterwards; and if none had preceded Luke in this work but Matthew and Mark, he would never have denominated them *many*. Besides, it is plain, from the manner in which preceding attempts are mentioned, that several of the accounts

that had been given, were such as could not be depended on; otherwise, this circumstance, that many had undertaken the work before him, instead of being a good reason for his taking up the subject, would have been a very strong reason for his not doing it, since Christians were already so amply supplied with information. But the very expressions he uses, evidently contain an insinuation, at least, that the writers he alludes to, had not themselves been sufficiently informed of the truth. "It seemed good to me," says he, "having "had perfect understanding of all things, from the very first, "to write them to thee in order, most excellent Theophi-"lus."

But to return to the two classes into which the questions relating to the history of the canon were divided, they will generally be found, agreeably to the observation already made, concerning the principal utility of each, to be treated by authors of different denominations, and with different views. Those who, as defenders of revelation, have entered the lists with its adversaries, more especially those, who, like Stillingfleet, in the last age, or Lardner, in the present, have applied themselves to support the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures, did always consider themselves as under a necessity of doing something for our satisfaction, in regard to the questions of the first order. Those, on the other hand, who have assumed the character not of the champions of religion, but of its interpreters, do commonly attach themselves more to the discussion of the questions of the second order. Accordingly, we find a great deal of information on these topics in the works of some of our scriptural critics; whether they come under the denomination of scholiasts, paraphrasts, commentators, translators, or barely editors, particularly the two last. The only examples of these I shall now mention, are Houbigant's prolegomena to the different parts into which he has divided his Latin version of the Old Testament, and Mill's and Wetstein's prolegomena to the splendid and valuable editions they have given of the Greek New Testament, with the various readings. These I only mention by the way, as deserving to be carefully perused by you, if you should happen to meet with them. For all the three (especially the first) being voluminous and expensive works,

and not very common, there are not many that, in this part of the world, have an opportunity of consulting them.

There is, indeed, one author, who, in a particular work written on purpose, has, with a good deal of judgment and acuteness, treated all the questions of both classes above enumerated: the author I mean, is Richard Simon, a priest of the Oratory, commonly known by the name of Father Simon. This man first published, in French, a book, entitled, *A critical History of the Old Testament*, which was soon after followed by another in the same language, entitled, *A critical History of the New Testament*; both which together complete the history of the sacred canon. This work has been translated, not badly, into Latin. There is a translation of it into English [which I have seen] that is very ill executed, in regard both to the sense and to the expression. In relation to the character of the performance, it will not be improper to make here a few observations. In the first place, it clearly evinces in the author a large fund of erudition, accompanied with an uncommon share of critical sagacity and penetration; and, I may justly add, a greater degree of moderation, than is generally to be met with in those, either of his sect as a Romanist, or of his order as a priest. What particularly qualified him for the task he has undertaken, was not only his thorough acquaintance with ancient history, sacred and profane; but his profound skill in the oriental languages, and in all branches of rabbinical literature. To say thus much is no more, in my apprehension, than doing justice to his abilities and indefatigable application: at the same time, it is but doing justice to you, my hearers, to take notice of what I think amiss in his performance. I told you, and told you truly, that he shows more moderation than is customary with those of his sect and order, yet not so much of impartiality, as not to betray, on several occasions, that (if he was not a disguised freethinker, as has been suspected by some eminent Catholics) he was deeply tinctured with the servile spirit of his church. Hence the implicit deference he sometimes officiously displays, to human prescriptions, to oral tradition, to those customs which can plead the sanction of antiquity, or of a general reception, however absurd they may be when examined on the principles of reason, how-

ever unscriptural, or even antiscriptural, when examined on those of holy writ: nay, I might add, his deference to those practices and tenets, concerning which his knowledge and discernment must have satisfied him, that their origin was such as could by no means serve to recommend them. Hence also the propensity he shows, on every occasion, to insist on the ambiguity and obscurity of the Scriptures, which he greatly exaggerates, and on the need of an infallible interpreter. Hence the straitened and ambiguous manner wherein he expresseth himself on some delicate points, which he could not altogether avoid mentioning, and on which it is plain that he did not think himself at liberty to speak out his sentiments. On such topics, ye will perceive a timidity and caution very unlike the generous freedom and boldness of a man, who hath ever been unaccustomed to the galling yoke of human authority. He puts one in mind of the situation described by the poet, and even appears to consider himself, as *incedens per ignes suppositos cineri doloso.* But I shall say no more here of this author, having had occasion, of late, both of giving, and of supporting my opinion of him, more fully, in the third preliminary dissertation to the translation of the Gospels, to which I refer you. As to his work, I may justly say, that on the whole, with all its errors and defects, (and what human composition is exempt from errors and defects?) The critical History of the Old and New Testaments contains a valuable fund of knowledge, and deserves an attentive perusal from every serious inquirer into the divine oracles. On some points, he has been warmly opposed by some Protestant divines, to whose animadversions on his work he has returned answers. The controversy is published in the later editions of his book. In some things they appear to be in the right, but not in all.

Houbigant, also, another priest of the Oratory, has, in the work of his above-mentinod, freely animadverted on some of Simon's observations. He too is no inconsiderable critic, though of a very different turn. The excess of Simon (where alterations appeared necessary) perhaps was diffidence; of Houbigant, temerity. I am not sure, that some of our modern English critics on the Hebrew Scriptures are not chargeable with this fault of Houbigant; I mean their making too

free with the text, in setting aside the common reading for the sake of emendations merely conjectural. But as to these things, every person ought to judge for himself. I purpose to lay only the materials before you, which may serve as premises: it is yours to canvass and arrange them, and to draw the proper conclusions. It is not my province to dictate, but to suggest. Your assent to any opinions, that might be laid before you, would be of little value, if it were the result of a lazy and implicit confidence, and not of a careful examination and rational conviction. Let me only subjoin, before dismissing this article, a recommendation of Michaelis's Introductory Lectures to the sacred books of the New Testament, which will deserve your serious perusal. Thus much shall suffice for what concerns the history of the canon, and the valuable purposes to which this branch of knowledge is subservient.

I proceed now to consider the ends which may be answered by ecclesiastical history, and to inquire what is the readiest and most profitable way of studying it. Before that memorable æra, the incarnation of the Son of God, the history of the church of God was the history of one particular people, first distinguished by the name of the patriarch Israel, (otherwise called Jacob) whose descendants they were; and after the loss of the ten tribes, who were carried into captivity by Shalmanezer, king of Assyria, denominated from Judah, one of the sons of Jacob, and one whose progeny the greater part of the remnant were, the nation of the Jews. The history of that people, and the history of the church, was, under the Mosaic economy, the same thing. Neither do we find in the annals, and other remains of those ancient times, the least vestige of the distinction of a community into church and state, such as hath obtained universally in the nations who have received the Christian law. This distinction hath given rise to a species of history, whereof the world before had not conceived so much as an idea. It may not therefore be improper, in the first place, to trace its origin, that we may the better apprehend what is meant by the history of the church.

When we consider attentively the institution of Moses, we perceive that it comprehends every thing necessary for forming a civil establishment; not only precepts regarding the disposi-

tion and morals of the people, and the public and private offices of religion, but also laws of jurisprudence; such as regulate the formalities of private contracts, inheritance, succession, and purchases; such as fix the limits of jurisdiction and subordination of judicatories, appoint the method of procedure in trials, both civil and criminal, and the punishments to be awarded by the judges to the several crimes. I may add, it comprehends also a sort of law of nations for the use of that people, in adjusting the terms of their intercourse with other states and kingdoms, and prescribing rules to be observed in making and conducting peace and war, entering into public treaties, and the like. In this polity or state, however, we find that what concerns religion forms an essential, or rather the principal part. Every thing in their constitution seems to act in subserviency to this great end, the preservation of the purity of their faith and worship. In this there was a very material difference between them and Pagan nations. In these last, the established superstition, in whatever popular traditions it may have been originally founded, was modelled by the ruling powers, in such a manner, as that it might best answer the purpose of an engine of government. The religion of such nations, therefore, can be considered in no other light, than as one of those political machines which in various ways co-operated for the support of the whole. With the Jews, indeed, the case was totally different: for, in their establishment, the religion was manifestly not the means but the end.

God hath been considered as in some respect the chief magistrate or head of that community, and the government for that reason has been not unfitly termed a theocracy. Thus much seems even implied in the words of God to Samuel, when the people became solicitous to have a king. And even when the kingly sway was established among them, the preservation of their religion, and of their code of laws, contained in the Pentateuch, (for they had no other) effectually prevented this change from being a subversion of their polity. The king himself was considered (though in a way somewhat different) as a minister of religion. His office was holy, and he was inaugurated with the like religious ceremony of unction, with which the high-priest was separated for the discharge of the duties of his sacred

function; and the king's person in consequence of this rite, was accounted holy as well as the priest's. A strong evidence of the influence of this circumstance we have in the behaviour of David to king Saul, his enemy, who sought his life. David found him asleep and unattended in the cave of Engeddi; and when desired by some of his followers to kill him, answered, "The "Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the "Lord's anointed, to stretch forth my hand against him, seeing "he is the anointed of the Lord: so David stayed his servants "with these words." Nevertheless the legislative power was not in the monarch. God was the sole legislator; for, as was observed, they had no permanent body of laws other than the books of Moses: besides, on every emergency of importance, the deity was consulted by Urim and Thummim.

It must be acknowledged, that this original constitution was gradually corrupted by them. Having found means, in prejudice to the divine commandments, to foist in rules and precepts of their own devising, under the specious name of oral traditions, they rendered them equivalent to laws; but still, as appears from the name they gave them, under the pretended sanction of divine authority. Thus their religious and civil rights were so blended, as not to admit a separation: the same judges indiscriminately took cognizance of both. These were the elders of the city in smaller matters, and in the first instance; and the great sanhedrim, senate, or council of the nation, composed of seventy senators and a president, commonly called the elders of the people, in greater matters, and in the last resort. And in this body there was generally a considerable number, though not any fixed proportion, of priests, Levites, and scribes. I mention, in conformity to our modes of thinking, the religious and the civil as different kinds of rights. Their customs and modes of thinking, on the contrary, prevented their making this distinction; all being alike comprehended in the same code, established by the same authority, and under the jurisdiction of the same magistrates. An attention to this is necessary, in order to make us understand the import of some expressions used in the New Testament. Thus the terms νομικοι and νομοδιδασκαλοι, which our translators renders lawyers and doctors of law, are precisely equivalent to what would be termed by us theologists and doctors

of divinity. Not that the words are mistranslated in our version; it was even proper in this case, by paying a regard to the etymology of the names, in rendering them into English, to suggest to the unlearned reader the coincidence of the two professions, divinity and law, among the Hebrews. With them, therefore, the divine and the jurist, the lawyer and the scribe, were terms which denoted nearly the same character; inasmuch as they had no other law of nations, or municipal law, but their religion, and no other religion but their law. Of any of the Pagan nations we may say with justice, that their religion was a political religion; but of the Jews we should say more properly, that their polity was a religious polity.

What may serve to give us an idea of such a constitution is the present state of the Mahometan world: Though Mahometism, in regard to its doctrine and its rites, borrows somewhat both from Judaism and from Christianity, it is, as an establishment, raised more on the Jewish model than on the Christian. With them the Alcoran is the only standing or statue law of the country; and as it is conceived by them to be of divine authority, and therefore unrepealable, it is both the only rule in all judiciary proceedings, and the only check upon the despotism of their princes. Hence it has happened, that though there never arose such a conception among the Jews, as what I may call the history of the synagogue, or among the Mahometans, as the history of the mosque, distinct from the histories of their different nations; the Christian church and Christian empires, or commonwealths, form histories, which, though connected as those of neighbouring republics or kingdoms may be, are in their nature perfectly distinct. It is worth while to inquire, what has given rise to this peculiarity in the religion of Jesus. An inquiry of this kind is a proper introduction to the study of ecclesiastical history. It will serve to throw light on the spirit and genius of our religion, and may lead to the detection of the latent springs, whence originally flowed that amazing torrent of corruption, by which, in process of time, this most amiable religion has been so miserably defaced.

The moral precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ are remarkably sublime and pure. They are admirably calculated for regulating the passions and affections of the heart, out of which, as So-

lomon has observed, are the issues of life. The doctrines he taught, which are the motives whereby an observance of the precepts is enforced, are all purely scriptural, arising from considerations of the divine nature, and of our own; especially of God's placability and favour, of the testimony of conscience, of the blessedness which the principles of true religion, faith, and hope, love to God, and love to man, infuse into the heart; and from considerations regarding the future retribution both of the righteous and of the wicked. The positive institutions or ceremonies he appointed, are both few and simple, serving as expressions of the love and gratitude of his disciples to God, their common parent, and to Jesus their master, the oracle of God; of their engagements to the Christian life, and their perfect union among themselves; and that, whilst these institutions were suffered to remain in their native simplicity, which constituted their true beauty and excellence, it was impossible they should be misunderstood. With regard to the founding of what might be called a polity or state, it is manifest that nothing could be farther from his intention. "His kingdom," he acquaints us, "is not of this world." It is not of a secular nature, to be either propagated or defended by the arm of flesh, or to have its laws enforced by human sanctions, or any such temporal punishments as merely human authority can inflict.

It is impossible to conceive a greater contrast between the spirit which his instructions breathe, and that spirit of pride and domination, which not many centuries afterwards became the predominant spirit of what then came to be denominated the church. Again and again did Christ admonish his apostles and other followers, to live as brethren and equals, not to affect a superiority over their fellow-disciples, or over one another; inasmuch as, in this, his kingdom would differ in its fundamental maxims from all the kingdoms of the world; that that person alone would there be deemed the greatest, whose deportment should be the humblest; and he alone superior, who should prove most serviceable to the rest. As to worldly monarchies or commonwealths, of whatever kind, he taught them to regard it as their duty to submit to such powers as Providence should set over them; cheerfully paying tribute, and yielding obedience to every human ordinance and command,

that should not be found to contradict the law of God. "Ren-"der to Cæsar," said he, "the things which are Cæsar's, and "to God the things which are God's." Far from affecting any secular power himself, he refused a royalty of this sort, when the people would have conferred it, and would not take upon him to decide in a matter of civil right and property, though desired. "Man," said he to the person who applied to him, "who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Then he said to the people, "Take heed and beware of covetousness;"—supporting his admonition, as usual, by an affecting parable. It was the end of his institution to purify the heart, and his lessons were ever calculated for extirpating the seeds of evil that remained there. In a similar manner, when the disciples privately contended among themselves who should be greatest, he took occasion to warn them against ambition. Jesus calling to him a child, placed him in the midst of them, and said, "Verily I say unto you, unless ye be converted," quite changed in your notions and conceptions of things, "and become as "children, ye shall never enter the kingdom of heaven. Who-"soever, therefore, shall become humble as this child, shall be "the greatest there." The same maxims were warmly inculcated by his apostles; and in their time, under the happy influence of their instructions, generally prevailed among Christians.

Now indeed was formed a community of the disciples of Jesus, which was called his church,—a word that denotes no more than society or assembly, and is sometimes used in the New Testament with evident analogy to the common use, to signify the whole community of Christians considered as one body, of which Christ is denominated the head, and sometimes only a particular congregation of Christians. In this general society, founded in the unity of their faith, their hope, their love, cemented, as it were, by a communion, or joint participation, as occasion offered, in religious offices, in adoration, in baptism, and in the commemoration of the sufferings of their Lord, preserved by a most friendly intercourse, and by frequent instructions, admonitions, reproofs when necessary, and even by the exclusion of those who had violated such powerful and solemn engagements: in all this, I say, there was nothing that interfered with the temporal powers. They claimed no jurisdiction

over the person, the liberty, or the property of any man. And if they expelled out of their own society, and, on satisfying their conditions, re-admitted those who had been expelled, they did in this only exercise a right, which (if we may compare great things with small, and heavenly things with earthly,) any private company, like a knot of artists or philosophers, may freely exercise; namely, to give the benefit of their own company and conversation to whom, and on what terms, they judge proper; a right which can never justly be considered as in the least infringing on the secular powers. The Christians every where acknowledged themselves the subjects of the state, whether monarchical or republican, absolute or free, under which they lived; entitled to the same privileges with their fellow-subjects, and bound as much as any of them (I might say more, in respect of the peculiar obligation which their religion laid them under,) to the observance of the laws of their country. They pleaded no exemption but in one case; a case wherein every man, though not a Christian, has a natural title to exemption; that is, not to obey a law which is unjust in itself, and which he is persuaded in his conscience to be so. But in regard to rights merely of a personal or private nature over which the individual has a greater power, far from being pertinacious asserters of these, they held it for an invariable maxim, that it is much better to suffer wrong, than either to commit or to avenge it.—This, in my judgment, is the true footing on which the apostolical church stood in relation to the secular powers. To what causes the wonderful change afterwards produced, ought to be attributed, I intend to make the subject of another prelection.

LECTURE III.

I CONCLUDED the last discourse I gave you on the subject of Sacred History, with an account of the origin and primitive nature of the Christian church. I observed to you, that, being founded in the concurrence of its members in the faith of the doctrine, and the observance of the precepts of Christ their common Lord, and being supported by brotherly affection one to another, as well as ardent zeal for the happiness of the whole, it was in no respect calculated to interfere with the rights of princes, or afford matter of umbrage or jealousy to the secular powers. But what God makes upright, man always corrupts by his inventions. This was the case of the human species itself. This was the case of the first religion, call it traditional, or call it natural, which, in process of time, did, in the different nations of the earth, degenerate into the grossest idolatry and abominations. And as to what has been communicated since by written revelation, this was certainly the case of the preceding or Mosaical institution. And this, upon inquiry, will be found to have been eminently the case of the present or Christian dispensation.

When the disciples in populous cities began to multiply, as no association of imperfect creatures will ever be found, in all respects, perfect, it is by no means strange, that sometimes differences and interferings should arise between individuals concerning matters of property and civil right. These differences occasioned law-suits before the ordinary judges, who were Pagans. Law-suits, as might be expected, not only occasioned, to the great prejudice of charity, heart-burnings among themselves, but tended to bring a scandal on the profession, whose criterion or badge had been expressly declared by their Master to be their mutual love. Examples there were of these mischiefs as early as the times of the apostles, particularly at Co-

rinth, a city abounding in wealth and luxury. The apostle Paul, effectually to remedy this evil, and to prevent the scandal and hurt which must arise from its continuance, first expostulates with the Corinthians (1 Cor. vi. 1, &c.) on the nature and dignity of their Christian vocation, to which it would be much more suitable patiently to suffer injuries, than, with so imminent a risk of charity, to endeavour to obtain redress :—" Why do " ye not rather," says he, " take wrong? Why do ye not ra- " ther suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" And even should the injury appear too great to be entirely overlooked, he enjoins them, and with them doubtless all Christians in the like circumstances, to submit those differences which should unhappily arise among them, to arbitrators chosen from among themselves. By this expedient a double end would be answered: the parties would, by the mediation of their brethren, be more easily conciliated to each other, and the reproach of the heathen would be prevented. It is evident that in this there was no encroachment on the province of the magistrate. A similar practice, ever since the Babylonish captivity, had obtained among the Jews in all the countries through which they were dispersed. To put an end to differences, either by compromise or by arbitration, is the exercise of a natural right, which all civil establishments acknowledge, and which most of them shew a disposition to encourage and promote. Jars and quarrels are universally admitted to be evils, though unavoidable in the present lapsed condition of human nature. Judicatories are erected to put an end betimes to these evils. The litigation of the parties, though a bad consequence, is permitted solely to prevent a worse. But no human polity commands men to be litigious. The less a man is so, he is the better subject of the state. The apostle's aim is to crush strife as early as possible, and to prevent an ill effect, though not the worst effect, of private differences; to wit, public contention in courts of law. His advice is such as every good man, every lover of peace, and therefore every good citizen, would very readily give to the members of any society in which he had a concern. It was, besides, perfectly suitable to the peaceable maxims of his great master: " Resist not evil. Agree with thine adversary quick- " ly whilst thou art in the way with him." And, " Blessed

"are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of "God."

Let it be remarked further, that those primitive and chosen arbiters claimed no coercive power of any kind over their fellow-Christians. The judgment they pronounced was very properly termed, in primitive times, the judgment of charity or love. By this principle alone were the judges influenced (without salary or emoluments) to undertake the office: by this principle alone were the parties disposed to submit to the sentence: and by this principle alone, where an injury had been committed, the offender was induced, as far as possible, to make reparation, and the offended as readily to grant forgiveness. No mention do we find of bailiffs, or tipstaves, fines, imprisonments, or distraining of goods. As their principal view in examining and deciding such questions was the radical cure of the evil, that is, of every thing that might look like animosity or discontent among the disciples of Christ; they neither had, nor desired to have any other means of enforcing their decisions, than such as the love of peace and union, and the interest of the common cause, necessarily gave them. To have applied, as umpires in Christian states are wont, for the interposition of the secular arm to enforce their decrees, would have been recurring to that very evil, for the prevention of which they had been nominated as judges by their brethren.

It deserves also to be taken notice of, that the apostle, far from taking upon him to assign this office of terminating their differences to such as he might think properly qualified, does not so much as recommend, or even mention to them any individual, or any class of men. On the contrary, he leaves the matter entirely to their own free choice. And indeed it was proper it should be so. This expedient is recommended purely from the charitable and prudential considerations of decency and peace. These could not be promoted otherwise than by the people's perfect confidence, not only in the equity but in the abilities of the persons to be entrusted, who therefore doubtless ought to be of their electing. Besides, it would have ill suited the genuine but spiritual dignity of the apostolic office, for Paul, so unlike the examples given by his Lord, to have assumed an authoritative diction in matters merely tem-

poral. For this reason I am inclined to think, that, if he had judged it necessary to offer his opinion as to the particular persons proper to be chosen, he would have judged it fitter to exempt the persons from a charge which might, in some respects, appear foreign from their office, than to recommend them to it.

The consequence, however, in fact was, that at least in several congregations or churches, the choice fell upon their ministers, a very natural effect of that confidence and respect which, in those times of purity, we have ground to believe they merited. Nor let it be imagined, from any thing advanced above, that this was a charge which the ministers of religion, as things then stood, ought to have declined. I have indeed acknowledged, that, in some respects, the cognizance of secular matters did not so naturally unite with their spiritual functions. But, consider the affair in another view, and we shall find that both in regard to the motive which influenced them, and the end which their acceptance of this task tended to promote, there was a real suitableness to the nature and design of their office. Hardly could ambition be supposed to operate in inducing them to accept a charge which added to their labour, and exposed them the more to the notice of the common enemy, and consequently to danger, without adding to their wealth, or rank, or even power, in the common acceptation of the term. For the award of these judges was no more than the declaration of their opinion; and the execution of the sentence was no more than the voluntary acquiescence of the parties. The pastors derived no kind of authority from this prerogative, except that which integrity and discernment invariably secure with those for whose benefit these talents are exerted. An authority this which depends entirely on the right discharge of the trust, and is incompatible with the abuse of it. Their motive, therefore, could only be the charitable desire of making peace and preventing offences. The harmony of Christians among themselves, and their unblemished reputation in respect of the heathen, were no less manifestly the blessed ends to which their labour of love contributed.

But might it not be urged, on the other hand, that this work would infallibly prove an avocation from the spiritual and more important duties of their office? In those early ages, before the

love of many had waxed cold, before the Christian congregations were become either so numerous or so opulent as some time afterwards they became, it is not to be imagined that such questions, in relation to property and civil rights, would be either so frequent, or so intricate, as to occupy a considerable portion of the arbitrator's time, and thereby interfere with his other more essential duties. Had it been otherwise, this judiciary charge ought doubtless, from the beginning, to have been devolved into other hands. The apostles themselves, we find, at first took the trouble of distributing to the people, according to the respective necessities of each, the money which the charity and zeal of the converts had thrown into the common stock. But when this work became so burdensome, as to interfere with the peculiar functions of the apostleship, they made no delay in resigning it to others. "It is not reason," said they, "that we "should leave the word of God, and serve tables." The like part, no doubt, ought those primitive pastors to have acted; the like part, no doubt, they would have acted, had there been the like occasion. That they did not, ought to be accounted by us as sufficient evidence that the like occasion did not exist, and that the task was then no way cumbersome. They had apostolical example alike for undertaking an office of benevolence, when it did not interfere, and for renouncing it when it did interfere, with the sacred duties of their spiritual function.

But to return, this custom of nominating their pastors to be arbitrators of all their differences in matters of civil property and right, from being pretty common, seems very quickly to have become general. The example of one Christian society influenced another, who did not choose to appear deficient in any testimony of esteem for their teachers. From being general it became universal. Every congregation would think it proper to avoid distinguishing themselves by a singularity, which would be understood to reflect either on the judgment or the discretion of their pastors.

Some learned men seem to be of opinion, that the business of determining such civil controversies as arose between Christians, belonged at first to the whole congregation; or, in other words, to that particular church or society whereof the parties concerned were members. But this mistake appears to

have arisen from confounding two things totally distinct. When one Christian had ground, real or supposed, to complain of the conduct of another as unbrotherly and injurious, after private methods of reclaiming the offender had been tried in vain by the offended, it belonged to the congregation to judge between them; and either to effect a reconciliation, or to discard one who, by his obstinacy in the wrong, shewed himself unworthy of their fellowship. This method had been clearly pointed out to them by their great founder. "If thy brother," says he, "trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee "and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy bro-"ther: but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one "or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, "every word may be established; and if he neglect to hear "them, tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the "church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican. "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, "shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on "earth, shall be loosed in heaven." What ye thus do, agreeably to the instructions I give you, God himself will ratify. The practice of the apostolic age, which has the best title to the denomination of primitive, is the surest commentary on this precept of our Lord. Not only were such private offences then judged by the church, that is, the congregation, but also those scandals which affected the whole Christian fraternity. Accordingly, the judgment which Paul, by the Spirit of God, had formed concerning the incestuous person, he enjoins the church, to whom his epistle is directed, that is, (to use his own words for an explanation) "them who at Corinth are sanctified in "Christ Jesus, called to be saints, to pronounce and execute." And in his second epistle to the same church, (chap. ii. 6.) he says, in reference to the same delinquent, "Sufficient to "such a man is the censure which was inflicted by many;" ὑπο των πλειονων, by the community. And (ver. 10.) "To whom "ye forgave any thing," addressing himself always to the congregation, "I forgive also." We admit, with the learned Dodwell [a], that in the censure inflicted on the incestuous person, the Christians at Corinth were but the executors of the

[a] De Jure Laicorum sacerdotali, c. iii. § 10.

doom awarded by the apostle. Nor does any one question the apostolical authority in such matters over both the flock and the pastors. But from the words last quoted, it is evident that he acknowledges, at the same time, the ordinary power in regard to discipline lodged in the congregation; and from the confidence he had in the discretion and integrity of the Corinthians, he promises his concurrence in what they shall judge proper to do. "To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive "also." Now, though in after-times, the charge of this matter also came to be devolved, first on the bishop and presbyters, and afterwards solely on the bishop, yet that the people, as well as the presbyters, as far down, at least, as to the middle of the third century, retained some share in the decision of questions wherein morals were immediately concerned, is manifest from Cyprian's letters still extant. In his time, when congregations were become very numerous, the inquiry and deliberation were holden (perhaps then more commodiously) in the ecclesiastical college, called the presbytery, consisting of the bishop, the presbyters, and the deacons. When this was over, the result of their inquiry and consultations was reported to the whole congregation belonging to that church, who were called together on purpose, in order to obtain their approbation of what had been done, and their consent to the resolution that had been taken: for without their consent no judgment could regularly be put in execution.

But this is quite a different subject of enquiry from questions merely in regard to right or property. The one is more analogous to a criminal, the other to a civil process. Two persons may differ in regard to the title to a particular subject, each claiming it as his, though neither accuse the other of injurious, or unchristian treatment; it is not because these pleas always spring from some malignity of disposition, that this amicable method of terminating them is recommended; but it is because there is an imminent hazard that, if long continued, and brought to public view, they breed some malignity in the minds of the parties towards each other, and afford a handle to idolaters to blaspheme the good ways of the Lord. Now it is manifest, in the first place, that questions of civil right are not so much within the sphere of the multitude, as those which concern

practical religion and morals; and, secondly, that the apostle does not recommend it to the people to take such secular matters under their own cognizance collectively, but only to appoint proper persons to judge in them. "If then," says he, "ye "have judgment of things pertaining to this life, set them to "judge who are least esteemed in the church." In the epithet *least esteemed*, I imagine he couches an ironical reproof to the Corinthians, for their appearing to be at a loss in finding persons proper to discuss matters in themselves of very little moment compared with those with which, as Christians, they were conversant. But to guard against being mistaken by too literal an interpretation of his words, he immediately subjoins, "I "speak this to shame you. Is it so, that there is not a wise "man amongst you? No, not one, that shall be able to judge "between his brethren?" So that it appears extremely probable, that unless what was first only a civil controversy, afterwards became a scandal, by the improper behaviour of one or both of the litigants, the people did not intermeddle in the cause. They left it entirely to the arbiters, or wise men, whom they had nominated for the purpose: and these, as was observed before, came at last universally to be the pastors.

Time, the greatest of all innovators, though, when it operates by slow degrees, the least observable;—time, I say, which alters every thing, did, from the universality of the practice of committing this trust to the pastors, and from its continuance for a course of successions in their hands, at length, in effect, establish it as a right. As charity cooled, ambition, a very subtle passion, insensibly insinuated itself. This it would do at first more modestly, under the guise of public virtue, as a desire of being more extensively useful to the people—afterwards more boldly, as a commendable zeal for every thing that could be deemed a prerogative of the sacred order. When persecutions had ceased, the churches, as they grew in the number and the wealth of their members, produced, in proportion, more fruits of contention, and fewer of brotherly love. Every thing, then, that might give any sort of ascendancy over the minds of others, would be greedily grasped at; and this privilege of judging, in civil matters, would then be very naturally claimed by the bishops, as a part of their office. It must, however, be

acknowledged, that though, in particular instances, this trust might be abused, it was, upon the whole, expedient for the Christian brotherhood, and could scarcely be considered as dangerous, so long as it remained on the original footing, and was unsupported by the secular arm.

But when Christianity came to receive the countenance and sanction of the ruling powers, the Roman emperors imagined they could not more effectually show their zeal for the cause of Christ, than by confirming every prerogative which had been considered as belonging to his ministers. It is, besides, not unlikely, that the happy influence which the pastoral decisions, aided by the authority of religion, generally had in composing differences among the people, would prove an additional motive for their interposition in support of a practice seemingly so conducive to public utility. But whatever be in this, so it was, that the bishop's power of judging, in secular matters, was not only ratified by law, but through an ill-judged indulgence, as soon appeared by the event, was further extended, backed by the secular arm, and rendered compulsory. Constantine, the first Christian emperor, made a law, that the sentence of the bishop should, in every case, be final, and that the magistrate should be obliged to execute it; that if, in any cause depending before the secular judge, in any stage of the process, either party, though in direct opposition to the other party, should appeal to the bishop—to his tribunal, from which there could be no appeal—the cause should instantly be remitted.

Then indeed, began the episcopal judgment to be properly forensic, having compulsive execution by the ministry of the the magistrate. Then, indeed, began the prelates, for the greater state and dignity, in their judicial proceedings, to adopt the model and appendages of civil judicatories, and to have their chancellors, commissaries, officials, advocates, proctors, registers, apparitors, &c. &c. Then originated these phrases, unheard before, *episcopal jurisdiction*, *episcopal audience*, and other such like. When one considers the origin of ecclesiastical judicature, as deduced above, and the reasons for which some expedient of this sort was first recommended by Paul to the Corinthians, it is impossible to conceive any thing more unsuitable to his design, than the footing on which it was now

established. One principal ground for which the apostle advised the measure was, to avoid the scandal which one Christian suing another before a tribunal of infidels, must necessarily bring upon their religion. "Brother," says he, "goeth to "law with brother, and that before the unbelievers." Now this evil was radically cured when Christianity became the established religion, and the secular judges themselves were taken from the Christian brotherhood. I acknowledge, however, that this is not the only ground of the apostle's recommendation: his other reason is, that to prevent law-suits entirely, by a compromise of any differences that might arise, or by a friendly reference to proper umpires, would be greatly conducive to the cause of charity, which is the common cause, by preserving peace among themselves: but no sooner is the bishop, or indeed any man, vested with legal and coercive authority, insomuch that people can be compelled to appear before him, and to submit to his sentence, than he ceases to be an umpire; his court is erected into a secular tribunal, and the procedure before him is as really a law-suit as that which is carried on before any other judge. All the weight, therefore, of the apostle's second reason from fraternal love, operates as strongly against suing an adversary in this court, as it does against suing him in any other.

It was not at first understood, or duly attended to, how great the change was, which this new arrangement of Constantine made in the constitution of the empire. It was, in effect, throwing the whole judiciary power of the state into the hands of the clergy. All the ordinary judicatories were now reduced to act solely in subordination to the spiritual courts, which could overrule the proceedings of the secular, whilst their own were not liable to be overruled by any. The civil magistrate, who might be compelled to execute their sentences, but was not entitled to revise or alter them, was, in fact, no better than the bishop's serjeant. His office, in this instance, was by no means magisterial: it was merely ministerial and subservient.

It was in vain, at the period at which we are now arrived, to imagine, that in the same way as formerly, a sense of religion should operate on the minds of the people. This is a sentiment of too delicate a nature to be rendered compatible with

the measures now adopted. From the moment the pastor was armed with the terrors of the magistrate, the power of religion was superseded, and the gentle voice of love was drowned in the clamour of commitments, forfeitures, and distress of goods. It deserves also to be remarked, that whilst matters remained on the primitive footing, there was the strongest tie on the pastors to a strict observance of equity, as it was thence only that their judgments could derive authority, or command respect. The power itself was of such a nature as could not long subsist after being perverted: the case was quite different now. It appeared of little consequence to draw respect to a verdict, to which they could enforce obedience: and this could equally be effected, whatever were the sentence, just or unjust, reasonable or absurd. Of the like pernicious tendency, as they flowed from the same cause, were the measures that were afterwards adopted to enforce ecclesiastical censures and excommunications, by the sanction of civil laws, inflicting pains and penalties. When so much depended on the dignitaries of the church, they could not fail to meet with all the adulation, and other seductive arts, by which the favour of the great and powerful is, through the influence of avarice, and other irregular desires, commonly courted by inferiors and dependants. Whether this would contribute to improve these shepherds of the flock in humility and meekness, may be submitted to the determination of every impartial and judicious hearer. One favourable circumstance, however, which perhaps inclined the people more easily to acquiesce in it, was, that it was the only considerable check which they had, for ages, on the too absolute power of the emperor. It is thus that Providence, in the worst of circumstances, is ever at work, bringing good out of evil, making usurpations on different sides balance and control one another, and rendering the greatest calamities reciprocal correctives.

But to proceed in our narration: the emperor Valens still enlarged the jurisdiction of the bishops, assigning to them the charge of fixing the prices of all vendible commodities, which was, it must be owned, a most extraordinary assignment. It is but doing justice to some worthy bishops to declare, that far from being gratified by these changes, they loudly complained of them. Possidonius relates concerning Augustine in parti-

cular, that though he gave attendance to this forensic business all the morning, sometimes till dinner-time, and sometimes till night, he was wont to say, that it was a great grievance to him, as it diverted his attention from what was much more properly his charge; that it was, in fact, to leave things useful, and to attend to things tumultuous and perplexed; that St. Paul had not assumed this office to himself, well knowing how unsuitable it was to that of a preacher of the gospel, but was desirous that it should be given to others. Such were the sentiments of that respectable father of the church. But every bishop was not of the same mind with Augustine.

About seventy years afterwards, when this authority came to be very much abused, the law of Constantine was repealed by Arcadius and Honorius, who limited the bishops, in civil matters, to those only which were referred to their judgment by the consent of both the litigants. But in some cities the bishops were already become too powerful, and too rich, to be so easily dispossessed. In Rome particularly, this new regulation had little or no effect, till Valentianus, about the middle of the fifth century, being himself in Rome, renewed it, and caused it to be put in execution. However, it was soon afterwards revoked by subsequent princes, who restored to the clergy a great part of that jurisdiction which had been taken away. Justinian in particular established the episcopal tribunal, allotting to it, in the first place, all causes that could be any way understood to concern religion, then the ecclesiastical delinquencies of clergymen, and also diverse sorts of voluntary jurisdiction over the laity. By the methods above recited, it happened, we find at last, that the brotherly corrections, and charitable interpositions, instituted by Christ and his apostles, degenerated into mere worldly domination. When, on the one hand, the ministers of religion thought fit to exchange that parental tenderness, which was the glory of their predecessors, for that lordly superiority which succeeded, it was a natural consequence, that, on the other hand, the amiable reverence of the child should be overwhelmed in the fearful submission of the slave. "Perfect "love," says the apostle John, "casteth out fear." It is no less true in the converse. "Perfect fear casteth out love." The great engine of the magistrate is terror; of the pastor,

love. The advancement of the one is the destruction of the other. To attempt to combine them in the same character, is to attempt to form a hideous monster at the best. Paul understood the difference, and marked it well in his epistles, especially those to Timothy and to Titus. "The servant of the Lord," says he, "must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, "patient and meek, not greedy of sordid lucre, no striker." The weapons of his warfare are not carnal: he forbears threatening, and does not employ the arm of flesh: his weapons are the soft powers of persuasion, animated by tenderness and love. In vain it is pretended, that the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, above explained, is not of the nature of dominion, like the secular. Where is the difference that can be called material? Is not the execution, wherever there is either opportunity or delay on the part of him who is cast, effected ultimately by the same methods of coercion, imprisonment, distraining of goods, and the like, as in the temporal judicatories? Are not the parties loaded with expenses to the full as heavy? Or are there not as many hungry vultures, retainers to the court, that must be satisfied? Is there not the same scope for contention, altercation, and chicane? Or are the processes in the spiritual courts (where such spiritual courts still subsist) less productive of feuds and animosities than in the secular?

In almost all cases wherein a particular mode of religion has obtained, in a country, a legal establishment, in preference to every other mode, there has been a strong tendency, in the acts of the legislature, to confound civil rights and civil authority with those that are purely moral or religious. Nor is it so easy a matter in practice, to ascertain the boundary, in every instance, and draw the line by which the one may be effectually discriminated from the other, as one at first would be apt to imagine. The distinction has been better preserved in our own country, notwithstanding the few exceptions of little moment which I shall mention, than perhaps in any other. There is a part of the office of a minister in this country that is purely of a civil nature, derived from the law of the land, and quite extraneous to the business of a pastor, which, in strictness, is only what is called the cure of souls. By this secular branch, I mean, the power with which presbyteries are vested by the

legislature, in giving decrees, after proper inquiry, against the land-holders, or heritors, as we more commonly term them, for the repairing, or the rebuilding, of churches, manses, and parochial schools; in the taking trial, and the admitting of schoolmasters; in the allotting of glebes, and perhaps some other things of a similar nature. That the presbytery, in these matters, does not act as an ecclesiastical court, is evident, not only from the nature of the thing, but from this further consideration, its not being in these, at least, in what relates to churches, manses, and glebes, as in all other matters under the correction of its ecclesiastical superiors, the provincial synod, and the national assembly, but under the review of the highest civil judicatory in this country, the court of session.

Another kind of civil power committed to presbyteries, is the power of presenting (as some understand the law) to vacant parishes, upon the devolution of the right, by the patron's neglecting to exercise it for six months after the commencement of the vacancy. In this, however, our ecclesiastical ideas, and our political, so much interfere, that the power of issuing out a presentation, has never yet, so far as I know, been exerted by any presbytery, in the manner in which it is commonly exerted by lay-patrons, or in the manner in which it was formerly exerted by bishops in this country, in the times of episcopacy, or in which it is at present exerted by bishops in Ireland, as well as in the southern part of the island. Presbyteries do commonly, I think, on such occasions, consult the parish, and regulate their conduct in the same manner as though patronages were not in force by law. I should, perhaps, add to the aforesaid list of particulars not properly ecclesiastical, the concern which the pastor must take, along with the heritors and elders of the parish, in the management and disposal of the public charities, also the power of church judicatories in appointing contributions for pious uses, to be made throughout the churches within their jurisdiction.

The conduct of a minister in regard to the few cases, which, in strictness, are without the sphere of his spiritual vocation, is, it must be owned, extremely delicate; and not the less so that in some of the particulars enumerated, as in what regards manses and glebes, he will naturally be considered as a party, from

the similarity of situation in which they are all placed, in the very cause in which he must act as a judge. Whether it is a real advantage to us to possess this kind of secular authority, is a question foreign to my present purpose. For my own part, I am strongly inclined to think, that if the legislature had made proper provision for supplying parishes and ministers with sufficient churches and manses, by means of the civil magistrate only, it had not been the worse for us. As, on the one hand, we should have been freed from temptations to partiality, which will, no doubt, sometimes influence our judgment as well as that of other men, so, on the other hand, we should have been freed from the suspicion and reproach of it, from which the strictest regard to equity and right will not always be sufficient to protect us. And in a character, on the purity whereof so much depends, I must say, it is of no small consequence, not only that it be unbiassed by any partial regards, but even that it be beyond the remotest suspicion of such a bias.

In England, the natural limits have been very ill preserved, and both kinds of jurisdiction, the civil and the religious, are made strangely to encroach on one another. I do not here so much allude to the judicial power of the consistorial courts, in matters matrimonial and testamentary, though these are purely secular, as to the confusion in what regards the executive part of jurisdiction. As, with them, church censures are followed with civil penalties, the loss of liberty, or imprisonment, and the forfeiture of the privileges of a citizen, the clergy must have become absolute lords of the persons and properties of the people, had there not been lodged in the civil judicatories a paramount jurisdiction, by which the sentences of the spiritual courts can be revised, suspended, and annulled.

Add to this, that the participation of one of the sacraments having been with them, by a very short-sighted policy, perverted into a test for civil offices, a minister may be compelled, by the magistrate, to admit a man who is well known to be a most improper person, an atheist, blasphemer, or profligate. The tendency of this prostitution plainly is, by the law of the land, to make void the institution of Jesus Christ, as far as regards its meaning and design. By the appointment of Jesus Christ, the participation was to serve in the participants purely as a

testimony of their faith in him, and love to him, "Do this in "remembrance of me." By the law of the land, it is rendered a qualification, or test, absolutely necessary for the attainment of certain lucrative offices, and for securing a continuance in them when attained; so that, in a great number, it can serve as a testimony of nothing but of their secular views. And to render this testimony, if possible, perfectly unequivocal, such people must have a certificate from the minister of their receiving the sacrament, to present to their superiors when required. For my own part, I do not see how the divine commandment, in what regards its spirit, power, and use, could be more effectually abrogated by statute than by thus retaining the form, the letter, the body of the precept, and, at the same time, totally altering the purpose, object, and intention.

Men have been very long in discovering, and even yet seem scarcely to have discovered, that true religion is of too delicate a nature to be compelled, if I may so express myself, by the coarse implements of human authority and worldly sanctions. Let the law of the land restrain vice and injustice of every kind, as ruinous to the peace and order of society, for this is its proper province; but let it not tamper with religion, by attempting to enforce its exercises and duties. These, unless they be free-will offerings, are nothing; they are worse. By such an unnatural alliance, and ill-judged aid, hypocrisy and superstition may, indeed, be greatly promoted, but genuine piety never fails to suffer.

Another consequence of the confusion of spiritual jurisdiction and secular in that church, however respectable on other accounts, (for these remarks affect not the doctrine taught, the morals inculcated, nor the form of worship practised, but only the polity and discipline,) another consequence, I say, is, that ecclesiastical censures among them have now no regard, agreeably to their original destination, to purity and manners. They serve only as a political engine for the eviction of tithes, surplice fees, and the like, and for the execution of other sentences in matters purely temporal. Would it have been possible to devise a more effectual method, had that been the express purpose, for rendering the clerical character odious, and the discipline contemptible? Luckily with us, in those few mat-

ters of a secular nature above specified, wherein presbyteries are, in the first instance, appointed judges, when the presbytery have given their decree, they have no part in the execution, and, indeed, no further concern in the matter. Their decision is merely declarative of right, and their power is exactly similar to that of arbitrators. The only difference is, that the former are authorized by law, the latter by the nomination of the parties: but in neither is there any coercive authority. The party in whose favour the sentence is given, applies for the intervention of the lords of session to compel the obedience of all concerned. This interposition is always granted as a thing of course, unless when the presbyterial decree is brought under the review of that court by suspension. In this case the lords may affirm, reverse, or alter, as they see cause. Then it becomes their own sentence, and is enforced in the usual manner. But no process in our church can terminate in excommunication, or in any ecclesiastical censures, but a process of scandal, by which term is commonly understood some flagrant immorality. These censures our constitution does not permit us to employ, on any occasion, as expedients for either securing our property, or asserting our prerogatives and power. And as we have not the same temptations with our neighbours to abuse them, so neither does the constitution in this country permit the civil magistrate to interfere with the procedure of the ecclesiastical courts. A sufficient security is provided against the rashness or injustice of the inferior judicatories, the presbyteries, by the right of appeal to the immediately superior tribunal, the synod, and thence, in the last resort, to the general assembly. Besides, where no civil penalty follows the sentence of the church, as is now very properly the case with us, the church courts have this additional motive, to be cautious of employing those censures except in clamant cases, namely, that if their sentences be not supported by what I may call the verdict of the country, the general sense of the people, they will very soon, and very justly, become contemptible. And this is the true footing on which all ecclesiastical censures ought to stand. But from what has been said, it is evident that, in our establishment, sufficient care has been taken that there be no material encroachment of either side, on the natural province of the other. What I have said on this

article, it will be observed, militates chiefly, if not solely, against what may be called a coercive power in the ministers of religion, either direct, by seizing the persons, and distraining the goods, of obnoxious people, or, which, in my judgment, is still worse, an indirect coercion, by employing ecclesiastical censures as the tools for effecting the same worldly purpose. Thus much only by the way.

I return to the narrative. When the western provinces were entirely severed from the eastern, Italy, France, and Germany, making one empire, and Spain a kingdom, the principal bishops in all these four provinces, who, to a considerable share of the national riches, had this advantage also, that they were at the head of an order which engrossed almost all the little learning of the times, were commonly chosen by the prince for his counsellors. The weight which this honourable distinction gave them in temporal matters, and in affairs of state, brought an immense increase of authority to the episcopal tribunal. In less than two hundred years afterwards, they pretended an absolute and exclusive right to all criminal and civil jurisdiction over the clergy, and, in various cases, over the laity also, under pretext that, though the persons were not, the causes were, ecclesiastical. Beside those, they invented another sort of causes, which they denominated causes of mixed cognizance, insisting that, in them, the bishop might judge, as well as the magistrate, and that the right of prevention ought to take place in favour of that court before which the cause should first be brought. In consequence of this curious distinction, they, at length, through their exquisite solicitude, and the attention of their agents and dependents, who found their account in their diligence, appropriated all such causes, leaving none of them to the secular judge. And as to those which remained still uncomprehended, under either denomination of ecclesiastical or mixed, they came at last to be comprised under one universal rule, which they most assiduously and strenuously inculcated as the very foundation of the faith; which was, that every cause devolved on the ecclesiastical tribunal, if the magistrate either refused, or neglected, to do justice. It was no wonder that in those days it should prove a common saying, that "except in cases border-"ing on the infidels, a good lawyer makes a better bishop than

"a good divine:" for the more he was occupied in hearing causes, and in other secular functions, the less leisure he had for teaching, which fell at last to be totally disused by those of that station. Thus what at first was the bishop's principal, I may say his whole, business, came to be regarded as no part of it.

But if the clerical claims had rested here, the state of Christendom had yet been tolerable. There still remained a remedy. Whenever the people in republics, and the princes in monarchies, should see the abuses become insupportable, they would, by their ordinances and edicts, reduce this overgrown authority of churchmen within reasonable limits, as, in former times, had been often done when judged necessary. But that encroaching spirit, which first put Christian states under the yoke, in a great measure succeeded at last in depriving them of the means of wrenching it from their necks. The lordly prelates having already arrogated to themselves all the pleas of clergymen, together with so many pleas of laymen, under the colour of spirituality, and having shared in almost all the rest, either by the name of mixed cognizance, or by superseding the magistrate, under the pretext that justice had been denied, or unduly delayed, they proceeded, about the middle of the eleventh century, aided by the profound ignorance and gross superstition of the age, to broach and maintain, that this extensive power of judging in the bishop was not derived from the concession of princes, or from their connivance, or from the consent of the people, or from immemorial custom, but that it was essential to the episcopal dignity, and annexed thereto by Christ. Now although the imperial laws are still extant in the codes of Theodosius and Justinian; in the capitulars of Charlemagne, and Lewis the Pious, and other later princes, both oriental and occidental; though all clearly show how, when, and by whom such power was conceded; though all the histories, both ecclesiastical and civil, agree in relating the same concessions, and the usages introduced, mentioning the reasons and causes; yet so notorious a truth has not been able to surmount the single affirmation of the canonist doctors, who have, on the contrary, had the audacity to support the divine origin of prelatical dominion. They have even boldly proclaimed those to be heretics,

who pay any regard to evidence as clear as sunshine,—who cannot submit entirely to renounce their understandings, and to be treated as fools, and blind.

They did not even confine themselves within these bounds, but maintained, that neither the magistrate, nor the prince himself, could, without sacrilège, intermeddle in any of those causes which the clergy had appropriated, because they are things spiritual, and of spiritual things lay-men are incapable. The light of truth was not, however, so perfectly extinct, but that even in those dark times there was some learned and pious persons who opposed this doctrine, showing that both the premises were false. The major, that laymen are incapable of spiritual things is, said they, absurd and impious, since they are, by adoption, received into the number of the sons of God, made brethren of Jesus Christ, and citizens of the New Jerusalem: since they are honoured to participate in the divine grace, in baptism, and in the communion of the body and blood of the Lord. What spiritual things are there superior to these? And if there be none, how can he, who partakes in these supreme blessings, be called absolutely incapable of spiritual things? But the minor also is false, that the causes appropriated to the episcopal tribunal are spiritual, since they are reducible to these two classes, transgressions and contracts, which, if our judgment is to be determined by the qualities assigned to things spiritual in scripture, are as far from being such as earth is from heaven.

But it seldom fares so well with mankind, that the majority is on the side of truth and reason. So it is in regard to our present subject, that, upon the spiritual power given by Christ to the church, or whole community of his disciples, of binding and loosing, that is, of excluding from, and receiving back into their communion, and upon the institution of Paul for terminating amicably their differences in matters of property by reference, without recurring to the tribunal of infidels, there has been erected, in a course of ages, and by several degrees, the principal of which have been pointed out to you, a spiritual-temporal tribunal, the most wonderful the world ever saw. In consequence of this it has happened, that in a great part of Christendom, (I speak not of Protestant countries, nor of the

Greek church) in the heart of every civil government there subsists another, independent of it, a thing which no political writer could before have imagined possible. How church power came all at last to centre in the Roman pontiff, I intend particularly to illustrate in some subsequent lectures, some of those I purpose to give on the rise and progress of the hierarchy. In the history of ecclesiastical jurisdiction I have now given, ye see the gradual usurpations of the church, or rather of the clergy, on the temporal powers; in the next, I propose to begin the sketch which I intend to lay before you, of the history of ecclesiastical polity, and trace the usurpations of part of the church upon the collective body.

I cannot conclude without acquainting you what will probably appear surprising, that, for a great part of the account now given, I am indebted to the writings of a Romish priest, Fra Paolo Sarpi, the celebrated historian of the council of Trent, one who, in my judgment, understood more of the liberal spirit of the gospel, and the genuine character of the Christian institution, than any writer of his age. Why he chose to continue in that communion, as I judge no man, I do not take upon me to say. As little do I pretend to vindicate it. The bishop of Meaux (Histoire des Variations des Eglises Protestantes, liv. 7me. ch. 110me.) calls him a Protestant and a Calvinist, under a friar's frock. That he was no Calvinist, is evident from several parts of his writings. I think it also fairly deducible from these, that there was no Protestant sect then in existence with whose doctrine his principles would have entirely coincided. A sense of this, as much as any thing, contributed, in my opinion, to make him remain in the communion to which he originally belonged. Certain it is, that as no man was more sensible of the corruptions and usurpations of that church, no man could, with greater plainness, express his sentiments concerning them. In this he acted very differently from those who, from worldly motives, are led to profess what they do not believe. Such, the more effectually to disguise their hypocrisy, are commonly the loudest in expressing their admiration of a system which they secretly despise. This was not the manner of Fra Paolo. The freedoms, indeed, which he used, would have brought him early to feel the weight of the church's re-

sentiment, had he not been protected by the state of Venice, of which he was a most useful citizen. At last, however, he fell a sacrifice to the enemies which his inviolable regard to truth, in his conversation and writings, had procured him. He was privately assassinated by a friar, an emissary of the holy see. He wrote in Italian, his native language; but his works are translated into Latin, and into several European tongues. His History of the Council of Trent, and his Treatise on ecclesiastical Benefices, are both capital performances. One knows not, in reading them, whether to admire most the erudition and the penetration, or the noble freedom of spirit every where displayed in those works. All these qualities have, besides, the advantage of coming recommended to the reader, by the greatest accuracy of composition and perspicuity of diction. This tribute I could not avoid paying to the memory of an author, to whom the republic of letters is so much indebted, and for whom I have the highest regard.

LECTURE IV.

In my last lecture, I attempted a brief detail of the principal causes which contributed to the rise and progress of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. In doing this, I had occasion to show how, from regulations originally the wisest and the best imaginable, there sprang, through the corruptions that ensued, one of the grossest usurpations, and one of the greatest evils that have infested the Christian church. This we are well entitled to call it, if what has proved the instrument of avarice, ambition, contention, and revenge, as well as the source of tyranny and oppression, can justly be so denominated. Ye know that the rise and progress of that form of government, into which the church, by degrees, came at last to be moulded, and which has been termed the ecclesiastical polity, and the hierarchy, is to be the subject of the present, and of some subsequent lectures. The former regarded only the jurisdiction of churchmen, the bishops in particular, in civil matters: the present subject is the internal polity of the church, and the form she has insensibly assumed, with the rules of subordination which have obtained, and, in many places, do still obtain, in the different orders. The one refers properly to the secular power of ecclesiastics, the other to the spiritual. The two discussions are nearly related, and have generally a joint connection with the same events, operating either as causes, or as instruments. However, in treating that which I have just now mentioned as the theme of this discourse, I shall avoid repetition, as much as possible, and shall not recur to what has been observed already, unless when it appears necessary in point of perspicuity, for the more perfect understanding of the argument.

Permit me to premise in general, that the question so much agitated, not only between Protestants and Papists, but also between sects of Protestants, in regard to the original form of government established by the apostles in the church, though

not a trivial question, is by no means of that consequence which some warm disputants, mislead by party prejudices, and that intemperate zeal, into which a struggle long maintained commonly betrays the antagonists on both sides, would affect to make it. It is said proverbially by the apostle, as holding alike of every thing external and circumstantial: "The kingdom of God is "not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in "the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ, "is acceptable to God, and approved of men." To me nothing is more evident, than that the essence of Christianity, abstractly considered, consists in the system of doctrines and duties revealed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and that the essence of the Christian character consists in the belief of the one, and the obedience of the other. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," says the apostle, "and thou shalt be saved." Again, speaking of Christ, he says, "being made perfect, he became the author "of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." The terms rendered sometimes believing, and sometimes obeying, are commonly of so extensive signification as to include both senses, and are therefore used interchangeably. Now nothing can be conceived more absurd in itself, or more contradictory to the declarations of scripture, than to say that a man's belief, and obedience of the gospel, however genuine the one, and however sincere the other, are of no significancy, unless he has received his information of the gospel, or been initiated into the church by a proper minister. This is placing the essence of religion not in any thing interior and spiritual, not in what Christ and his apostles placed it, something personal in regard to the disciple, and what is emphatically styled in scripture, *the hidden man of the heart*; but in an exterior circumstance, a circumstance which in regard to him is merely accidental, a circumstance of which it may be impossible for him to be apprized. Yet into this absurdity those manifestly run who make the truth of God's promises depend on circumstantials, in point of order no where referred to, or mentioned, in these promises; nay, I may say with justice, no where, either explicitly declared, or implicitly suggested, in all the book of God.

Not but that a certain external model of government must have been originally adopted for the more effectual preservation

of the evangelical institution in its native purity, and for the careful transmission of it to after ages. Not but that a presumptuous encroachment on what is evidently so instituted, is justly reprehensible in those who are properly chargeable with such encroachment, as is indeed any violation of order, and more especially when the violation tends to wound charity, and to promote division and strife. But the reprehension can affect those only who are conscious of the guilt: for the fault of another will never frustrate to me the divine promise given by the Messiah, the great interpreter of the Father, the faithful and true witness to all indiscriminately, without any limitation, that "he who receiveth his testimony hath everlasting life." I may be deceived in regard to the pretensions of a minister, who may be the usurper of a character to which he has no right. I am no antiquary, and may not have either the knowledge or the capacity necessary for tracing the faint outlines of ancient establishments and forms of government, for entering into dark and critical questions about the import of names and titles, or for examining the authenticity of endless genealogies; but I may have all the evidence that consciousness can give, that I thankfully receive the testimony of Christ, whom I believe, and love, and serve. If I cannot know this, the declarations of the gospel are given me to no purpose: its promises are no better than riddles, and a rule of life is a dream. But if I may be conscious of this, and if the Christian religion be a revelation from heaven, I may have all the security which the veracity of God can give me, that I shall obtain eternal life.

"No," interposes a late writer [a], "Cannot God justly "oblige men, in order to obtain the benefits which it is his good "pleasure to bestow, to employ the means which his good plea-"sure hath instituted? It pleased not him to cleanse Naaman "the Syrian from his leprosy by the water of any other river "than the Jordan; insomuch, that had Naaman used the "rivers of Syria for this purpose, he would have had no title to "expect a cure." Certainly none, Mr. Dodwell. But could any thing be more explicit than the oracle of God pronounced by the prophet? "Wash in Jordan seven times, and thou "shalt be clean." Naaman did not, and could not misunder-

[a] Dodwell Parænesis, 34.

stand it. Whereas, had the prophet said barely, "Wash "seven times, and thou shalt be clean;" and had the Syrian then washed seven times in Abana or Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, and remained uncured, would he have had reason to regard Elisha as a true prophet? Could he have formed from this transaction the conclusion which he did so justly form in favour of the God of Israel? Yet such an expression of the promise, wherein an essential article of the condition is suppressed, would be necessary to make the case parallel to the present. *He who believeth, and is baptized,* saith our Lord, *shall be saved.* You qualify his promise with the additional clause, "if he be baptized by a minister who has himself re- "ceived baptism and ordination in such a particular manner." But where do you find this qualification specified? scripture is silent. The Spirit of God hath not given us the remotest hint of it; would it not then be wiser in you to follow the advice which Solomon hath given by the same Spirit? *Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.* The terms of the gospel-covenant are no where, in the sacred pages, connected with, or made to depend on, either the minister, or the form of the ministry, as Naaman's cure manifestly was on his washing in one particular river. But so strange is the inconsistency of which human nature is susceptible! No person can be more explicit than this man, in admitting that there is nothing in scripture from which we can infer that any particular form of polity was, for every age and country, appointed in the church. A passage to this purpose I shall soon give you in his own words. Nay more, that very episcopacy, for which he so strenuously contended, making the existence of Christianity depend upon its reception, is, by his own account, not only destitute of scriptural warrant, but is not properly of apostolical origin, not having been instituted till after the death of the apostles, in the sixth or seventh year of the second century: for even John, who lived the longest, is not said to have reached that period. Arrogant and vain man! what are you, who so boldly and avowedly presume to foist into God's covenant, articles of your own devising, neither expressed nor implied in his words? Do YOU venture, a worm of the earth? Can YOU think yourself warranted to stint what God hath not stinted, and,

following the dictates of your contracted spirit, enviously to limit the bounty of the Universal Parent, that you may confine to a party, what Christ hath freely published for the benefit of all? Is your eye evil, because he is good? Shall I then believe, that God, like deceitful man, speaketh equivocally, and with mental reservations? Shall I take his declaration in the extent wherein he hath expressly given it; or as you, for your own malignant purpose, have new-vamped and corrected it? "Let "God be true, and every man a liar." But as for you, who would thus pervert the plainest declarations of the oracles of truth, and, instead of representing Christ as the author of a divine and spiritual religion, as the great benefactor of human kind, exhibit him as the head of a faction, your party forsooth,—I must say that I have stronger evidence that you have no mission, than all your traditions, and antiquities, and catalogues, will ever be able to surmount. For if "he whom "God sendeth, speaketh the words of God," (and this is a test which Christ himself hath given us) he who contradicteth God's words is not sent by him. This is alike the language of scripture, and the language of common sense. Your's is neither.

In regard to the outward order, however important it be, it affects not the essence of religion in the least; and even our adversaries themselves being judges, is not represented in scripture as affecting it. The garments which a man wears, or the house in which he lodges, however necessary for his accommodation and comfortable subsistence, are not, as his limbs and members, and still less, as the powers and faculties of his mind, a part of his person. Now in this respect there appears a very close analogy. For though, in our present situation, clothes and dwelling are requisite for protecting us against the inclemencies of the weather, and other external accidents, we may, nevertheless, have both clothes and dwelling of different forms, yet equally commodious. Nay, one form may be more convenient in certain climates, and certain situations, which is less convenient in other climates, and other situations. The same thing may, with equal truth, be affirmed concerning the form of church-government. This is evidently true also of civil government. Of whatever mode it be,

absolute or limited, monarchical or republican, unless it degenerate into tyranny, it is entitled to the obedience of the subjects. For "the powers that be," αι ουσαι εξουσιαι, "are ordained of "God." No criterion is mentioned but established possession. Now, I can see no reason why a church may not subsist under different forms as well as a state; and though it must be owned that one form may be more favourable than another to the spirit and design of the constitution, we cannot always judge with safety from the first of these how much it has retained of the last. Nay, I must acknowledge, that for any thing I could ever discover in the sacred oracles to the contrary, the external order may properly undergo such alterations, as the ends of edification in different exigencies may require, and prudence may direct. The only thing of real importance is, that nothing be admitted which can, in any way, subvert the fundamental maxims, or infringe the spiritual nature, of the government.

Thus much in general is conformable to the doctrine both of the church of England, and of the church of Scotland. For how different soever these churches are in the plans of government they have adopted, and how much soever each of them is attached to its own, they equally avoid limiting the Christian ministry to one particular model. The former, in her 23d article, intitled, *Of ministring in the Congregation*, says expressly, "Those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which "be chosen and called to this work by men who have public "authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and "send ministers into the Lord's vineyard." This, if it mean any thing, and be not a mere identical proposition, of which, I own, it has some appearance, refers us ultimately to that authority, however modelled, which satisfies the people, and is settled among them. Again, in the Westminster Confession of Faith, which is of equal authority with us, as the 39 articles are of in England, chap. xxv. entitled, *Of the church*, sect. 3. "Unto "the catholic visible church Christ hath given the ministry, "oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and per-"fecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world." And this is all that is said on the subject. Neither has presumed to delineate the essentials of a Christian ministry, or to say any thing which could be construed to exclude those who are

governed in a different manner from that in which they themselves are governed. So much moderation has on this article been shewn by both churches. I shall add to these the doctrine of the episcopal reformed church of Scotland, contained in a confession of faith ratified by law in this country in 1567; which, though set aside in the time of the civil wars to make room for the Westminster Confession, was re-enacted after the Restoration, and continued in force till the abolition of prelacy at the Revolution. I recur to it the rather, in order to shew how much, on this article, the sentiments of our late nonjurors (for we have none of that description at present) differ from the sentiments of those whom they considered as their ecclesiastical predecessors, and from whom they derived their spiritual pedigree.

In article 19. entitled, *Of the Notes of the True Kirk*, (I use the words of that formulary) it is affirmed, "They are neither "antiquity, title usurped, *lineal descence*, place appointed, nor "multitude of men approving an errour."—Again, article 23. *Of the right Administration of the Sacraments* :—"That sacra"ments be rightly ministrate, we judge two things requisite: "the one, that they be ministrate by lawful ministers, whom we "affirm to be only they that are appointed to the preaching of "the word, they being men lawfully chosen thereto by some "kirk, &c. We fly the doctrine of the Papistical kirk in par"ticipation of their sacraments: 1st. Because their ministers "are no ministers of Christ Jesus," &c. Here not only is lineal descent expressly excluded, but its very channel is removed, as the Popish clergy are declared (I think with too little ceremony and too universally) to be no ministers of Christ. Nay, all that appears externally necessary, according to them, to constitute a minister, is the choice of some congregation. Far from believing one particular form of ecclesiastic polity to be sacred and inviolable, they say, article 21. *Of General Councils*, &c. "Not that we think that any policy, and any order "of ceremonies can be appointed for all ages, times, and "places."

It will be owned, likewise, by those who on this subject are capable of examining with coolness, and pronouncing with impartiality, that we have not that sort of information in holy

writ, from which we can with certainty form a judgment concerning the entire model of the apostolic church. What we can learn thence on this subject, we must collect from scattered hints given, as it were, incidentally, when nothing seemed less the intention of the writers, than to convey to us a particular account of the plan of the society they had formed. It is a just observation of a writer of the last century, and deserves the attention of disputants on both sides:—"Videmus apostolos in "scriptis suis magis sollicitos fuisse de ministrorum *virtutibus* "quam *gradibus*, et pluribus inculcasse et descripsisse eorum "mores, quales illo statu digni essent et loco, quam quidem de "forma regiminis disceptasse." [Hoornbeck de episcopatu.] But who can be more express on the silence of scripture, in regard to this article of church-government, than that zealous defender of prelacy, Mr. Dodwell, in a passage which I but just now promised to give you in his own words. They are these [a]:—"Est sane admodum precaria omnis illa argumentatio, qua colligitur disciplinæ *ecclesiasticæ* in posterum recipiendæ rationem omnem *e scripturis* N. Fœderis esse hauriendam. *Nullus* enim est qui id profiteatur aperte sacri "scriptoris *locus*. Et ne quidem *ullus* qui ita de *regimine* agat "*ecclesiastico* quasi id voluisset scriptor, aut scriptoris auctor "*Spiritus Sanctus*, ut formam aliquam unan *regiminis* ubique "et in omne ævum duraturi describeret. Nusquam scriptores "*sacri* satis expresse tradiderunt, quanta secuta fuerit *in regimine* ecclesiarum mutatio cum primum discederent *a synagogarum* communione *ecclesiæ*. Nusquam satis aperte, quantum *donis* concessum fuerit Spiritus S. *personalibus*, quantum "vicissim *locis* et *officiis*. Nusquam *officiarios extraordinarios* "qui illo ipso *seculo* finem habituri essent ab *ordinariis* satis "accurate secernunt qui nullo unquam seculo essent, dum "iterum veniret Christus, in desuetudinem abituri. Imo sic "omnia *tum* passim *nota* ipsi quoque nota supponunt, nec ipsi "posterorum causa explicant, quasi eum duntaxat, qui *tum* obtinuerit, statum in animo haberent. *Officia* ipsa nuspiam "*qualia* fuerint, aut quam late patuerint, ex professo describunt, quod tamen sane faciendam erat si formam prescripsissent *perpetuo* duraturam." To this I shall only subjoin, If

[a] Paræncsis, N. 14.

the case be as you, Mr. Dodwell, have, in my opinion, in the passage above quoted, fairly represented it; if all the reasoning be quite precarious from which men conclude, that the whole model of ecclesiastical discipline may be extracted from the writings of the New Testament; if there be no passage of any sacred writer which openly professes this design; if there be not one which so treats of ecclesiastical government, as if the writer, or the writer's author, the Holy Spirit, had intended to describe any one form of polity, as being to remain every where, and for ever inviolate; if the sacred penmen have no where declared, with sufficient clearness, how great a change must take place in church-government, when the churches should first withdraw from the communion of the synagogues; if they no where clearly enough shew how much was allowed to the personal gifts of the Holy Ghost, and how much also to places and offices; if they no where, with sufficient accuracy, distinguish the extraordinary officers who were not to outlive that age, from the ordinary who were not to cease till the second coming of Christ; nay, if all the things then generally known, they also suppose known, and never, for the sake of posterity, explain, minding only the state wherein things were at that time; if they no where professedly describe the ministries themselves, so as to explain either their nature or their extent; which was surely indispensable, if they meant to settle a model in perpetuity; in brief, if the case was really as that gentleman affirms it to have been, (for what is here put by me hypothetically, is positively averred by him in terms the most express) what can we conclude, but that nothing was farther from the view of the inspired writers, than to prescribe any rule to us on the subject, or to give us any information which could lead us to imagine, that a particular form of polity was necessary, or even more acceptable to God than another? What can we conclude, but that it was intended by the Holy Spirit thus to teach us to distinguish between what is essential to the Christian religion, the principles to be believed, and the duties to be practised, and which are therefore perpetual and unchangeable; and what is comparatively circumstantial, regarding external order and discipline, which, as matters of expedience, alter with circumstances, and are therefore left to the adjustment of human prudence? What

can better account for the difference remarked by Hoornbeck, that the apostles were more solicitous about the virtues than the degrees of the ministers, and more strenuous in inculcating the manners to be observed by them as suitable to their office, and conducing to their usefulness, than copious in describing the form of their government? The one is essential, the other only circumstantial; the one invariable, the other not.

But what shall we say of a doctrine which, like this of the episcopal polity, was never alleged to belong to the religion of nature, and is now discovered by one of its warmest advocates, to have no better title to be accounted a principle of revelation, not having been instituted by Christ, or his apostles, or even in their time? No mention is made of it in scripture, the canon of which was finished, before this novelty appeared upon the earth; nor is any appointment given in holy writ by anticipation concerning it. Whence then have we either the institution, or the doctrine of its necessity? I know not what answer Dodwell could give to this, except the following. From frequent study, profound researches into antiquity, and critical investigations concerning doubtful idioms, we have made the discovery. These exercitations, I acknowledge, have their use, and are sometimes subservient to the cause of religious verity; chiefly indeed for illustrating its evidences, or repelling objections, but never for teaching its fundamental principles or essential duties. These, like the prophet's vision, are written in characters so legible and plain, that *he may run who readeth them.* No scope for Herculean labour, bodily or mental. *Say not, Who shall ascend into heaven?* No need for scaling the firmament, diving into the abyss, or crossing the ocean. *The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thine heart.* That system must convey a strange idea of revelation, which exhibits it as, in respect of the truths necessary to be known by all, perfectly mute to the unlearned, and of service only to linguists, critics, and antiquaries. How different is the notion conveyed by Christ, the founder and the finisher of the faith! *I adore thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because having hidden these things from sages and the learned, thou hast revealed* them to babes. It was to instruct and save the ignorant and the sin-

ful that Jesus Christ came into the world. And, in consequence of this divine purpose, nothing recommended wretches to this charitable attention more than their needs. Besides, if the scriptures contain a revelation from God, and consequently be true, we must admit them to be perfect, and to want nothing essential to the information of Christians in faith and practice; for this is what they affirm concerning themselves. They are *able to make* men *wise unto salvation: for all scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* But in this a true Dodwellian can never consistently acquiesce, who maintains a certain ecclesiastical polity to be essential, concerning which he at the same time admits, that scripture has given us neither information nor command. This necessarily forces us into the dilemma of affirming, either that the doctrine of Dodwell is not only false but pernicious, in subverting the authority of scripture; or that scripture is both false and self-contradictory, in asserting the perfection of its own doctrine, whilst it has withholden all intelligence upon one article, without the observance of which, all the other instructions it gives are vain, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins. And who is the revealer of this article, this mystery which hath been hidden from ages and generations? If the revelation itself be of importance, it is but just to acknowledge, that the world is indebted for it more to Mr. Henry Dodwell, than to all the apostles and evangelists of our Lord, or even to all the sacred penmen of either Old or New Testament put together.

But as it is not every one's province or humour to trace nonsense through all its dark and devious windings, I shall desist from expatiating further on the absurdity of making that a doctrine of the gospel with which the New Testament does not acquaint us, or a Christian institution which did not commence till after the decease of the last of the apostles; and shall only further observe, that the defect of scriptural evidence, so frankly acknowledged on the other side, will be allowed by any person of understanding to be an irrefragable argument, that the polity or model of government was not judged by the apostles to be of so great consequence, as that it should of necessity be

either fixed or perfectly known. Whereas it must have been of the last consequence, if the very existence of a church, and the efficacy of God's word and ordinances, totally depended on it.

But that there was no such dependance, as is supposed, on any thing in the form of the ministry, is manifest also from this, that in the directions given to Christians, as to the judgments they ought to make of those who may assume the character of teachers in divine things, the people are never directed to an examination of, what I may call, the ostensible source of the authority of those teachers, but solely to the consideration of their character and conduct, and of the doctrine which they teach. "Beware of false prophets," said our Lord, "who "come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are raven-"ing wolves." But how shall we beware of them, or by what criterion shall we distinguish the false from the true? Shall we critically examine their spiritual pedigree, and see whether, by an uninterrupted succession of regular baptisms and ordinations, they be lineally descended from the apostles? Impossible. A method this which would involve every thing in impenetrable darkness, and plunge all the hopes and prospects of the Christian into a scepticism, from which there could be no recovery. On the contrary, the test he gives is plain and familiar. Mark his words: "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men ga-"ther grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every "good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bring-"eth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil "fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, "and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall "know them." And the apostle John says, "Believe not "every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." And how are we to try them? The sequel plainly shews, that it is by the coincidence of their doctrine with that of the gospel. The like was also the method prescribed under the former dispensation by the prophet. "To the law and to the "testimony," says he, "if they speak not according to this "word, it is because there is no light in them." A very different mode of trial would now be assigned by a zealous patronizer of the hierarchy, Popish or Protestant.

There is a memorable incident, and entirely apposite to the point in hand, which is recorded by two of the evangelists, Mark and Luke. John said to Jesus, "Master, we saw one "casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because "he followeth not us." Jesus answered, "Forbid him not; "for there is no man who shall do a miracle in my name, that "can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us "is for us." The apostles still retained too much of the Jewish spirit, not to consider more the party than the cause. "He "followeth not us,"—a reason which, to this day, alas! would be thought the best reason in the world by most Christian sects, and by every individual who possesses the spirit of the sectary. From Christ's testimony we have ground to believe, that what this man did, was done with an intention truly pious; not to make dissention, or form a party against the disciples, but to promote the common cause. And what was so done, would probably be productive of the great end of the Christian ministry, the conversion of the hearers to the faith, love, and obedience of the Messiah.

But even where so much cannot be said of the goodness of the intentions, we are not warranted to decide against the utility of success. The apostle Paul observes, that whilst some preach Christ of love, others do it of envy, and strife, and contention. This, I imagine, is the scriptural, I say not the ecclesiastical, notion of schismatical teachers. For that alone is schism, in the sense of holy writ, which wounds charity, and which, in order to unite Christians more closely to a sect or faction, alienates their hearts from one another, and consequently from the interest of their common Master; or which detaches them in respect of love, even though outward unity should not be violated, from the whole community of Christians, in order to attach them more firmly to a part. The former only, those who preach out of love, the apostle regards as true; the latter, those who preach out of envy and strife, he considers as pretended preachers, or heralds of Christ. Yet he adds: "What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pre-"tence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do re-"joice, yea and will rejoice."—Would he have said so, think ye, if a defect, either in the mission, or in the disposition of the

minister, could have rendered their ministrations ineffectual to the hearers? In those days of the church's infancy, when the far greater part of the world was Jews and Pagans, such teachers as the apostle speaks of, though bad men themselves and uncommissioned, might have been instrumental in converting infidels and idolaters to the faith of Christ. But there had been no subject of joy here, if the conversion of such, however sincere, and their participation in the ordinances of religion, however piously intended by the participants, had been, according to the doctrine of our antagonists, rendered ineffective by the defects of the instrument. The very success of the preaching of such unauthorised pretenders would, in that case, have been a fitter subject of grief to the apostle, than of joy, as the unhappy proselytes might, by an apparent conversion to Christ, have been lulled into a security much more fatal than the unbelief in which they were before. His joy, on the contrary, was a demonstration of his sentiments, that the people might receive spiritual benefit, whatever exceptions there might be to the ministry. I own the case is, in many respects, worse with the modern authors of division, the founders of new sects, in countries where Christianity is universally professed, and where there is free access by the scripture, both to its doctrines, and to its precepts.—It is hard to conceive, to what the disciples of some recent sectaries can be made proselytes, unless to uncharitableness, hatred, and calumny against their fellow-Christians, and that on the most frivolous or unintelligible pretexts. For neither idolatrous worship, nor the exaction of unlawful terms of communion, are so much as pretended. If, according to our Lord's criterion, we are to know the tree by the fruits, the evil fruits above-mentioned, the invariable effects of such divisions, will be thought more analogous to the nature of briars and thorns, than to the fruit of the fig-tree, or of the vine. However, even of such contentious teachers I would not presume to say, that they may not occasionally do good, though there be but too great reason to dread that the evil preponderates. And even here I am to be understood as speaking of the first authors of such unchristian separations. I know too well the power of education, and of early prejudice, to impute equal malignity to those who may succeed them, whether teachers or disciples.—But to return,

To assign to the Messiah, or rather, under that colour, to procure for themselves a worldly kingdom, was not an error peculiar to the Jews. The same evil principle which, in them, proved the cause of the rejection of the true Messiah, proved quickly among the Gentiles, who acknowledged him, the source of the grossest corruption and perversion of his institution. After it became the aim of church rulers to secularize the kingdom of Christ: they uniformly had it for their object, in exact conformity to the example the Pharisees had given them, to remove the attention of men from things spiritual and essential, to things corporal and circumstantial. And in this, as in all other corruptions, they have but too well succeeded. The more effectually to answer this purpose, they have not scrupled to introduce such dogmas, (of which that I have been examining in this lecture is an example,) as tend to subvert the spirit of the gospel, and are inconsistent with the veracity of God.

Of a very different character and tendency are some sentiments I have lately met with concerning the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, in the Sermons of Mr. Comings, prebendary of St. Patrick's, Dublin, now deceased. They convey an idea of the church truly rational, enlarged, and sublime; such as strongly distinguishes it from all the pitiful and contracted pales, so uncharitably erected by the different sectaries of all known denominations, Popish and Protestant, established and unestablished: for it is not a legal establishment, as some vainly imagine, or any thing merely external, that either makes or unmakes a sectary in the scriptural sense; it is solely the spirit by which a man is actuated.—But without any further comment, I shall leave this author to speak for himself, by giving you his own words. In my judgment, he unfolds his conceptions on this subject with uncommon energy. It may not, however, be improper to premise, that the words in the gospel to which the preacher specially refers, are these: (Luke xvii. 15, 19.) *One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks; and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering, said, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he*

said unto him, Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. "Thus you see, though the Jews learnt no humility, "no gratitude, yet the *Samaritan*, ignorant as he was *then* "thought, misinformed as he is *now* reckoned; yet the *Samaritan* was deeply impressed with *both*. The Almighty him-"self taught him, and he was obedient to the divine instructor. "The pride of religion would make the Jews brand him with "the factious name of heretic or schismatic; but were he "heretic or schismatic, he offered to heaven as grateful a sacri-"fice as was ever laid on the altar at Jerusalem by prophet or "by saint. The contentions about the forms of religion de-"stroy its essence. Authorised by the example of Jesus "Christ, he will send men to the Samaritan to find out how to "worship. Though your church was pure, without spot or "imperfection, yet if your heart is not turned to God, the wor-"ship is hateful, and the prayers are an abomination. The "homage of the darkest Pagan, worshipping he knows not "what, but still worshipping the unknown Power that formed "him, if he bows with humility, if he praises with gratitude, "his homage will ascend grateful to heaven: while the dead "careless formality of prayer, offered up in the proudest Chris-"tian temples, shall be rejected as an offering unholy. For "think you that the Almighty esteems names and sects? No: "it is the heart that he requires; it is the heart alone that he "accepts. And much consolation does this afford to the con-"templative mind of man. We may be very ignorant in spiri-"tual matters, if that ignorance cannot be removed, and yet "may be very safe. We may not know in what words to "clothe our desires in prayer, or where to find language wor-"thy of being presented to the Majesty of heaven. But "amidst the clouds that surround us, here is our comfort: in "every nation, he that worshippeth with humility, worshippeth "aright; he that praiseth with gratitude, praiseth well.—The "pride of establishments may despise him, but the wisdom and "the righteousness of heaven will hear, and will approve him. "It was to the humble thankful Samaritan, though separated "from the true church; yet it was to him alone, because he "alone returned to glorify God, that Jesus Christ said, *Arise,* "*go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole.* Thus, in a mo-

"ment, vanished, and became of no effect, the temple of the "Jews, built by prophetic direction: its ritual given by their "illuminated legislator: all gave way to the profound humility, "and the sublime gratitude, of what they called an unbeliever, "—of what Jesus Christ called the only faithful servant of "God among them."—Permit me only to subjoin, to the above quotation, what is particularly apposite to the subject now in hand. Let us but reflect who were at that time the sacred ministers, the teachers and the priests of the Samaritans? In the very beginning of their defection, in the revolt of the ten tribes under Jeroboam, the sacred historian acquaints us, that this idolatrous king cast out the priests of the Lord, and made priests of the lowest of the people, who were not of the family of Aaron, or of the sons of Levi. And of the same character they still remained. No order of men, existing at present in the Christian church, can give any evidence of a divine right, compared with that of the tribe of Levi, and of the posterity of Aaron in the Jewish. Yet this passage, in relation to the humble, the pious, and the thankful Samaritan, may show us effectually, if we be capable of being taught, that under no dispensation of things whatsoever, can the validity of God's covenant be made to depend on the ministry, or his promises be rendered ineffectual to the humble believer, and grateful worshipper, on account of any defect in the priesthood. We see that such defects were no obstruction to the efficacy of the humble Samaritan's faith, or the acceptance of his person. *Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole.*

Thus much I thought proper to premise, in regard both to the nature and to the consequence of the question about the government instituted by the apostles in the church. I next proceed to the examination of the fact. And in this it is my purpose to proceed with all the candour and impartiality of which I am capable; and to speak out boldly what appears to me most probably to have been the case, without considering what sect or party it may either offend or gratify. I am sensible that, in historical inquiries of this kind, it becomes us to be modest, since we must know, that persons, both judicious and candid, have mistaken; for, on all the questions that arise from the subject, there have undoubtedly been men of this character

on the opposite sides. It is comparatively of little moment, whether we approve most the monarchical, the aristocratical, or the democratical form of church-government, or to which of the three we have thought it our duty to subject ourselves. The only error that is here of consequence is, when people are led to consider this as a ground of disunion, or, which is still worse, of alienation of affection from those who, though differing in this particular, have received the like precious faith with themselves; when they think themselves warranted by this difference in unchurching their brethren, as the phrase is, that is, in pronouncing them to have no concern, no portion in the commonwealth of Christ. This I take to be indeed a fundamental error, as it strikes at the root of that charity which is the end of the commandment, and the bond of perfectness; and consequently, without which, whatever be our boasted attainments in faith, in knowledge, or in clerical degrees, we are, in all that concerns the vitals of religion, absolutely nothing. It was to guard you all against an extreme of this kind, that I have been so particular in the discussion of this preliminary point.

Now, as to the form of the church first instituted by Christ and his apostles, let it be observed, that there were at that time especially two objects which seemed equally to claim attention. The one was the conversion of the world to the Messiah; the other was not only the preservation of the converts that should be made, but the securing of a continuance of the faith in their families. These two, though they concur to the ultimate end they are fitted to answer, the glory of God in the salvation of men, are very different in themselves, and require very different instruments and measures. To take a similitude from temporal things: it is one thing to conquer a kingdom, and become master of it, and another thing to govern it, when conquered, so as to retain the possession which has been acquired. The same agents, and the same expedients, are not properly adapted to both. For the first of these purposes, there was a set of extraordinary ministers or officers in the church, who, like the military forces intended for conquest, could not be fixed to a particular spot, whilst there remained any provinces to conquer. Their charge was in a manner universal, and their functions ambulatory. For the second, there was a set of ordinary mini-

sters, or pastors, corresponding to civil governors, to whom it was necessary to allot distinct charges or precincts, to which their services were chiefly to be confined, in order to instruct the people, to preside in the public worship and religious ordinances, and to give them the necessary assistance for the regulation of their conduct. Without this second arrangement, the acquisitions made could not have been long retained. There must have ensued an universal relapse into idolatry and infidelity. This distinction of ministers into extraordinary and ordinary has been admitted by controvertists on both sides, and therefore cannot justly be considered as introduced (which sometimes happens to distinctions) to serve an hypothesis. The great patron of prelacy avows the difference, in a quotation lately given from his Parænesis, at the same time that he complains that the sacred writers have not been explicit in assigning the boundaries of either: an oversight which I own I think would have been unpardonable in them, if they had believed the knowledge of this article so indispensable as Mr. Dodwell did.

Of the first kind, or extraordinary ministers, were the apostles, prophets, and evangelists. These at least were the chief. For, from some passages in Paul's writings, it appears very probable, that all those who were endowed, in an eminent degree, with any of the χαρισματα, or supernatural gifts, were considered as a sort of extraordinary ministers. Compare 1 Cor. xii. 28, &c. with Eph. iv. 11, &c. But it is not with that extraordinary and temporary arrangement, supported by the power of working miracles, which was calculated chiefly for the founding of the church, that we are here concerned. It is with the ordinary and permanent establishment, to the suitable discharge of the duties of which, it is not the χαρισματα, but the χαριτες, not the miraculous and shining gifts of the Spirit, but the less conspicuous, though more important, graces of knowledge, faith, and charity, which are requisite.

In regard to these, it is from the Acts of the apostles and the epistles, that we principally derive our information. Thence we learn, that the apostles regularly established churches, and settled therein proper ministers in every city and village, where they had made as many proselytes as might form a congregation. I do not say that the settlement of pastors, and other of-

ficers, took place immediately on the conversion of the people, but on the first convenient occasion afterwards. The converts every where seem, for some time, to have been instructed chiefly by such of their number as were endowed with supernatural gifts, those called prophets in particular, who also had the principal part in conducting the public offices of religion. Of these, mention is made in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts. This was the footing on which the apostles commonly left the places they travelled to, on their first visit. It was not till afterwards, either by messengers sent on purpose, or on a second or third visit, that they gave them fixed teachers. It has been said, that in the extraordinary and unsettled state of the church, the sacred offices were not so much appropriated to the ministers, as to exclude private Christians from occasionally exercising them, especially in the absence of the former. The first order given to the eleven *to make converts* (for such is the import of μαθητευσατε) *to baptize and to teach*, carries in it nothing from which we can discover, that it was a commission entrusted to them exclusively as apostles or ministers, and not given them also as Christians; and that the apostles were particularized, because best qualified, from their long attendance on Christ's ministry, for promoting his religion in the world; but not with a view to exclude any Christians, who were capable, from co-operating with them in the same good cause. That this last was the construction then put upon that charge, appears not improbable, from the subsequent part of the scripture history. Philip, though no apostle, and probably at that time no more than a deacon, (that is, a trustee for the poor, in matters purely secular) did all to the Ethiopian eunuch, which the apostles had in charge with regard to all nations. He converted, baptized, and taught him. No reasonable man can doubt that any private Christian was then, and is still, warranted, if he can, to convert an infidel, and to teach him the principles of Christianity. Yet these are two important parts of the apostolical commission. If I should say the most important parts, I should not speak without warrant. Our Lord himself made proselytes, and instructed them, but baptized none, leaving this merely ministerial work to his disciples.—Peter was sent to open the door of faith to the Gentiles, by the conversion of Cornelius and his family. But the

charge of baptizing them, he trusted entirely to the Christian brethren who attended him. Ananias, a disciple, was employed to baptize Paul. And Paul says himself of his own mission, that Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel, denoting thereby, according to the import of the Hebrew idiom, that baptizing, compared with preaching, though a part, was but an inferior and subordinate part of his charge.—Nothing here advanced can justly be understood to combat the propriety of limiting, for the sake of discipline, the power of baptizing, to fewer hands than that of preaching, when once a fixed ministry is settled in a church, and regulations are adopted for its government.

The doctrine I have been illustrating, so far from being, as some Romanists ignorantly pretend, one of the many novelties sprung from the Protestant schism, was openly maintained at Rome, without censure, about the middle of the fourth century, by Hilary, a deacon of that church, a man of erudition and discernment, of whom I shall have occasion to speak afterwards. This commentator, in his Exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians, iv. 11, 12. has these words;—"Postquam omnibus "locis ecclesiæ sunt constitutæ, et officia ordinata, aliter com-"posita res est, quam cœperat; primum enim omnes docebant, "et omnes baptizabant, quibuscunque diebus vel temporibus "fuisset occasio." A little after,—"Neque Petrus diaconos "habuit quando Cornelium cum omni domo ejus baptizavit; "nec ipse, sed jussit fratribus qui cum illo ierant ad Cornelium "ab Joppe." Again: "Ut ergo cresceret plebs, et multipli-"caretur, omnibus inter initia concessum est et evangelizare, "et baptizare, et scripturas in ecclesia explanare." Such were the sentiments of a respectable member of the Roman presbytery in those days; for conclave, both in name and thing, was as little known at Rome then as it is with us at present. Now though the gradual settlement of a regular ministry throughout the church, would gradually abolish an usage of this kind, it is natural to conclude, that wherever there happened to be a return of the like exigencies, through want of licensed pastors, every private Christian would not only be entitled, but bound, if capable, to supply the defect. So thought the Christians, who were dispersed on the persecution mentioned Acts viii. For

"they that were scattered abroad," the historian makes no distinction, "went every where, preaching the word." Now the apostles remained in Jerusalem, and ordinary pastors were not yet appointed. This is agreeable to what appears to have been the general opinion, and even the practice where circumstances required, as far down as Tertullian's time, about the beginning of the third century. This author, the first of the Latin fathers, in his *Exhortatio ad castitatem*, wherein he inveighs against second marriages, having urged that Paul made it necessary in a bishop that he be the husband of one wife, introduces an antagonist replying, that the prohibition to pastors implies a permission to others to marry oftener. He answers, that the distinction among Christians, between the priesthood and the people, who, by the evangelical law, are all priests, is of the church's making, that is, as I understand him, is not of divine original; referring to what appears to have been the approved practice of laymen even then, who, when none of the clerical order could be had, celebrated the eucharist, and baptized, and served as priests to themselves. "Three persons," says he, "though laymen, make a church." "Ubi ecclesias-"tici ordinis non est consessus, et offers, et tinguis, et sacerdos "es tibi solus. Sed ubi tres, ecclesia est, licet laici." It matters nothing to the present question, that his doctrine of the unlawfulness of second marriages is unreasonable; it matters nothing, that his argument is inconclusive; we are concerned only with the fact, to which he refers as notorious.

Hardly could any attentive reader, who is a stranger to the disputes that in latter ages have arisen about holy orders, think the passages susceptible of any other meaning than that I have given it, and which indeed Rigaltius, a Romanist, and Grotius, a Protestant, had given before me. I know the pains which has been taken by some learned men, who cannot conceive a kingdom of Christ, that is not a kingdom of priests, totally to disguise this passage. The French Jesuit Petavius admits, indeed, according to the obvious meaning of the words, that Tertullian argues from the known practice in the case specified; and as the Romish church acknowledges the validity of lay-baptism, he admits also, that *tinguis* means, you baptise; but adhering sacredly to the principles of his party, does not admit

that *offers* can be interpreted, you *consecrate* the eucharist. The Irish nonjuror Dodwell, of whose system lay-baptism and lay-consecration are equally subversive, not only admits, but proves, that unless *offers* refer to the priestly office, as well as *tinguis*, there can be no meaning in the argument. At the same time he affirms, that this author does not argue from a known practice, but from his own opinion of the rights of laymen in such emergencies, explaining *offers et tinguis, you have a right to celebrate the eucharist, and to baptize.* The impartial inquirer, who has no hypothesis to serve, will readily agree with Dodwell, that the only interpretation of *offerre,* as connected with *tinguere,* is to celebrate the eucharist; and no less readily agree with Petavius, that the only natural import of the present of the indicative here used, is, you do, and not, *you have, in my judgment, a title to do.* The argument drawn from an allowed and known custom, in support of his opinion, was confessedly of some weight, but an argument in support of his opinion, drawn from another opinion of his, equally questionable, and, as Dodwell thinks, contradicted by the universal practice of the age, was of no conceivable weight, and could not have been adduced by any person of common understanding. Tertullian, like Dodwell, held some extravagant tenets, but was incapable of arguing so ridiculously as this critic would represent him. That laws, declarative of right, are sometimes expressed in the present of the indicative, is true, but never when the common practice is in contradiction to the law. Dodwell's quotations from the apostolical constitutions are so far from answering his purpose, that they are a confirmation of what was just now observed. They are not more declarative of the canons than of the customs which then obtained. If the prevailing practice had been repugnant to those canons, no writer of common sense, who did not intend to deceive, would have expressed himself in that manner. The words which conclude the argument, *Igitur si habes jus sacerdotis,* &c. show no more than that the author inferred the right from the practice. Is there any incoherence in saying, *In an urgent case, when no priest can be found, you baptize, you give the eucharist, and you alone serve as priest to yourself. If, then, you have the right of priesthood in yourself, in a case of necessity, you*

ought to have the discipline of a priest, wherever it may be necessary to exercise the right. This is literally Tertullian's argument.

But to return from this digression to those fixed officers or ministers, whom the apostles assigned to the churches which they planted; beside some general names used promiscuously in scripture, such as ἡγούμενοι, διδάσκαλοι, ὑπηρέται, λειτουργοί, guides, teachers, ministers, officers, and perhaps a few others, there are three terms more frequently applied to them, which are, ἐπίσκοποι, πρεσβύτεροι, διάκονοι, bishops or overseers, presbyters or elders, and deacons or attendants. Now the doubts that have arisen are chiefly concerning the two first of these names, ἐπίσκοποι and πρεσβύτεροι; and the question is, whether they are names for the same office, or for different offices. This, at least, is the first question; for it must be owned, that there have been some strenuous advocates for the apostolical origin of episcopacy, who have entirely given up the argument founded on the names. As to the last title of the three, διάκονοι, it is allowed on all hands, that it is the name of a different office, though commentators are not entirely agreed as to the nature and extent of that office.

That the terms ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος, are sometimes used promiscuously in the New Testament, there is no critic of any name who now pretends to dispute. The passage, Acts xx, is well known. Paul, we are told, ver. 17. "from Miletus sent "to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church" τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας. In the speech he made to them, when they were convened, he has these words, ver. 28: "Take heed, therefore, "to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost "hath made you overseers," ἐπισκόπους, bishops is the term in the Greek. Here there can be no question that the same persons are denominated presbyters and bishops. Pretty similar to this is a passage in the epistle to Titus, ch. i. The apostle says, ver. 5, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou "shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain "elders, πρεσβυτέρους, in every city." Ver. 6, "If any be blameless," &c. Ver. 7. "For a bishop must be blameless," ἐπίσκοπον. Here, unless we will say that the apostle argues very incoherently, he must mean the same thing by *elder*, at the fifth verse, and *bishop*, at the seventh. In like manner the apostle

Peter: 1 Pet. v. 1. "The elders, πρεσβυτερους, which are among "you, I exhort," &c. Ver. 2. "Feed the flock of God which "is among you, taking the oversight thereof," επισκοπουντες, discharging the office of bishops. The truth is, the word επισκοπος was properly the name of office, and πρεσβυτερος was a title of respect, borrowed from the Jewish custom, (which was, indeed, analogous to that of other nations) of calling not only the members of the sanhedrim πρεσβυτεροι, elders or senators, but also the members of the city councils.

To all this, indeed, the common answer is, that most of the names of offices are, in scriptural language, not so uniformly appropriated to the particular offices, as not occasionally to be applied to others, agreeably to the etymological import of the words. Thus the term διακονοι, is applied to the apostles themselves. John calls himself πρεσβυτερος, elder; so also does Peter; and Christ is styled eminently both apostle and bishop. To the same purpose it is urged, that sometimes in the Old Testament the *high-priest* is called simply the priest. It would, however, be much more to the point, if a passage could be named wherein an ordinary *priest* is styled *high-priest*. The superior order, it is universally admitted, includes the inferior, but this does not hold conversely. Now in the first passage above quoted from the Acts, it is manifest, that the ordinary pastors of Ephesus are styled bishops; for in no period of episcopacy, according to the present acceptation of the word, was there a plurality of bishops in one city and church. It is indeed affirmed, that in one passage, 2 Cor. viii. 23. the term *apostle* is applied to those who were of a lower order than the apostles, properly so called. It is, however, observable, that the expression there used, is αποστολοι εκκλησιων, apostles, or messengers of the churches, not apostles of Jesus Christ, or apostles simply, without any addition, which are the common expressions used for those who were selected to be the principal promulgators of the faith. And it shows, that Theodoret, who lived several hundred years after, was very much puzzled where to find the origin of the office of bishop, as the word in his time implied, when he imagined he discovered it in a phrase which occurs but once in the New Testament, and of which the application is extremely doubtful. But the short, though fully reply, to

the aforesaid answer, is this: It is not denied, that those terms urged by the objectors, are, on certain occasions, urged with greater latitude than in the ordinary application. Nevertheless, the ordinary and peculiar application is supported by so many clear passages of sacred writ, as to be rendered quite indubitable. On the contrary, one single passage from the apostolical writings has not yet been produced, in which it appears from the context, that the two terms πρεσβύτερος and ἐπίσκοπος mean different offices.

Nay, we can say more than this, which may be called a negative and presumptive proof only, that there is the strongest positive evidence which the nature of the thing can admit, that in those writings the two terms uniformly mean the same office. The apostle Paul, in the directions he gave to Timothy, about the proper supply of churches with suitable ministers, takes particular notice of two orders, and no more. One of them he calls bishops, and the other deacons. Now, if by bishops he meant what in modern style is so denominated, those who have the charge of many presbyters, it is astonishing that he should not think it of importance to give any directions about the qualifications of presbyters, who had the immediate inspection of the flock; at the same time that he is very particular in regard to the qualifications of deacons, though their order has ever been allowed to be much inferior to the other. And if (as even some friends of episcopacy have admitted) he here means by bishops only presbyters; that an office of so great importance as the bishops, (if it was a different and superior office) should have been entirely overlooked, is no less surprising. Further, in support of this argument, that there were but two orders then established, let it be observed, that Paul, in addressing the Philippians, i. 1. expresses himself in this manner: "To all the saints at Philippi, with the bishops and "deacons." All commentators of any name, except Dr. Hammond, of whom I shall take notice afterwards, agree, that by bishops here is meant the ordinary pastors or presbyters; for it is almost universally allowed, as I had already an occasion of hinting, that when the distinction came to be established, there was never more than one bishop in a city, or church. And as true it is also, that then there was no city which had a church,

and not a bishop. Now if there was a bishop, in the modern sense, at Philippi, when the apostle wrote that letter, it looks a little strange, that he who was the chief of that Christian society should be the only person that was neglected by the apostle on that occasion. The arbitrary suppositions that have been framed, in order to elude the force of this argument, as they are without even the shadow of evidence, can merit no regard. On the other hand, it is remarkable, and may serve, if possible, to convince the most obstinate, of the futility of those suppositions, that in the epistle written by Polycarp to the same congregation, about sixty years after, we find mention only of those two orders, the presbyters and the deacons; and no more allusion made either to a vacancy in their number, or to any spiritual superior, present or absent, than was made by Paul in his letter to them so long before. Now whether we call their pastors *bishops*, with the apostle, or *presbyters*, with Polycarp, is a matter of no consequence, as it is evident that both speak of two orders only among them, and not of three; and wherever one of these names is employed, the other is dropped, this being the surest evidence which the nature of the thing admits, that the words are synonymus.

But I observe further, that the sacred penmen, in speaking of, or to particular churches, if the spiritual instructors and guides of the people be mentioned at all, always mention them in the plural number, which, though it may be compatible with some little difference in rank or precedency, can scarcely be thought compatible with so material a difference as that of office or trust. Thus the apostle to the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. v. 12. "We beseech you, brethren, to know them "which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and "admonish you," τους κοπιωντας και προισταμενους και νουθετουντας. It is remarkable too, that the term προισταμενος, as every other name implying direction, or government, came afterwards to be appropriated to the bishop; with whom, according to the doctrine of high church, the whole authority over the congregation was originally lodged. The presbyters could do nothing but as they happened to be authorized or commissioned by him. The use of such terms here, in the plural, when the apostle was addressing the members of one single church, shows, that the ap-

plication was very different, and that matters were then on a very different footing. In the Acts, also, it appears very plain, that all the stated pastors are always considered as coming under one denomination. Thus we are told of the apostles Paul and Barnabas, Acts xiv. 23. that, when journeying together, they ordained elders, πρεσβυτερους, in every church. This is, indeed, the common title given to the ministers settled in particular churches throughout that book. When a collection is made for the poor Christians in Jerusalem, it is sent τους πρεσβυτερους: and if the pastors of any church are sent for, that they may receive proper directions, it is τους πρεσβυτερους. In the fifteenth chapter, where we have an account of the consultation held at Jerusalem, about the Mosaic ceremonies, the ordinary pastors are no less than five times, to wit, in verses 2d, 4th, 6th, 22d, and 23d, distinguished by this appellation from either the apostles, or private Christians, or both. Nor do we find a single hint in the whole book of any thing like different classes of πρεσβυτεροι. The name επισκοποι occurs there but once, which is in the place above quoted, where it is applied to the same individuals, who, in the same chapter, are termed πρεσβυτεροι.

In regard to the imposition of hands, which is considered by many as a necessary attendant on ordination, we find this also, 1 Tim. iv. 14. attributed to the presbytery. The word πρεσβυτεριον, though it occurs sometimes in the New Testament as applied to the Jewish sanhedrim, or council of elders, is found only in the passage now quoted, applied to a Christian council. The sense of the word πρεσβυτερος, as well as the application of the word πρεσβυτεριον, in other places, to a convention of those called πρεσβυτεροι, determines the sense of the word in this passage. And, indeed, all Christian antiquity concurs in affixing this name to what may be called the consistory of a particular church, or the college of its pastors.

It must be remarked by every person who gives due attention to the apostolical writings, that the custom then, if not uniformly, was, with very few exceptions, to give a plurality of teachers to every church. The state of the Christian community at that time, which consisted almost entirely of new converts, men and women, who had been habituated to principles and practices very different from those they were to be in-

structed in, beside the more imminent dangers to which all Christians, but especially the pastors, were then exposed, rendered this precaution absolutely necessary. They had, by this means, a probable ground to expect, that if some of the teachers should fall a sacrifice to the malice of their enemies, some would escape their fury, and that in every church a timely opportunity might thus be found of supplying their vacancies, so that the congregations should never be entirely destitute of pastors.

To what has been adduced from sacred writ, I shall add two very ancient testimonies: one of them is from the most respectable remains we have of Christian antiquity next to the inspired writings. The piece I allude to, is the first epistle of Clemens Romanus to the Corinthians as it is commonly styled, but as it styles itself, the epistle of the church of God at Rome to the church of God at Corinth. It is the same Clement whom Paul (Phil. iv. 3.) calls his fellow-labourer, and one of those whose names are in the book of life. There we are told, chap. xlii. that "the apostles having preached the gospel "in countries and towns, constituted the first-fruits of their "ministry, whom they approved by the Spirit, bishops and "deacons of those who should believe." And in order to satisfy us, that he did not use these words in a vague manner for church-officers in general, but as expressive of all the distinct orders that were established by them in the church, he adds, "Nor was this a new device, inasmuch as bishops and deacons "had been pointed out many ages before: for thus says the "scripture, *I will constitute their bishops in righteousness, and* "*their deacons in faith.*" The passage quoted is the last clause of the 17th verse of the 60th chapter of Isaiah. It is thus rendered in our version: "I will make thine officers peace, and "thine exactors righteousness." Whether this venerable ancient has given a just translation, or made a proper application of this prediction, is not the point in question. It is enough that it evinces what his notion was of the established ministers then in the church. And if (as no critic ever questioned, and as his own argument necessarily requires) he means the same by bishops with those who, in the Acts, are called πρεσβυτεροι, whom the apostles Paul and Barnabas ordained in every

church, and whom Clement, in other parts of his epistle, also calls πρεσβυτεροι, namely, the ordinary teachers, it would seem strange, that the bishop, properly so called, the principal officer of all, should be the only one in his account, of whom the holy Spirit, in sacred writ, had given no previous intimation. Nay, do not the words of this father manifestly imply, that any other office in the church than the two he had mentioned, might be justly styled a *new device* or invention? Dr. Pearson, in his Vindiciæ Ignatianæ, insists much, that whenever any of the fathers purposely enumerate the different orders in the church, they mention always three. If the above account given by Clement is not to be considered as an enumeration, I know not what to call it. If two were actually all the orders then in the church, could he have introduced the mention of them, by telling us he was about to give a list, or catalogue, or even to make an enumeration of the ecclesiastical degrees? Is this a way of prefacing the mention of so small a number as two? It is this writer's express design to acquaint us what the apostles did for accommodating the several churches they planted, in pastors and assistants. And can we suppose he would have omitted the chief point of all, namely, that they supplied every church with a prelate, ruler, or head, if any one had really been entitled to this distinction?

If it should be urged, that under the term επισκοποι both functions of bishop and presbyter are comprehended, it is manifest, that as it was the writer's scope to mark the different offices established, as being predicted by the prophets in the Old Testament, there cannot be a stronger indication, that there was then no material, if any difference, between them, and that they were properly denominated and considered as one office. The appellatives also by which they are denoted, are invariably employed by him in the plural number, as being equally applicable to all. It is said in chap. i. τοις ἡγουμενοις ὑμων ὑποτασσομενοι, submitting to your governors or guides. It is remarkable also, that the word ἡγουμενοι, here used in the plural of all their pastors, is one of those terms which came afterwards to be appropriated to the bishop. Nay, since it must be admitted, that in the New Testament, as well as in the ancient Christian monument just now quoted, the words επισκοποι and πρεσβυτεροι, are not occasionally,

but uniformly, used synonymously, the very discovery, that there was not any distinctive appellation for such an office as is now called bishop, is not of inconsiderable weight to prove that it did not exist. We know that every other office, ordinary and extraordinary, is sufficiently distinguished by an appropriated name.

But I cannot help observing further, concerning this epistle of Clement, that though it was written with the special view of conciliating the minds of the Corinthians to their pastors, commonly in this letter called presbyters, some of whom the people had turned out of their offices, or expelled, απο της επισκοπης, from their bishopric, as his words literally imply, there is not the most distant hint of any superior to these πρεσβυτεροι, whose proper province it was, if there had been such a superior, to inspect their conduct, and to judge of it; and whose authority the people had treated most contemptuously, in presuming, without so much as consulting him, to degrade their presbyters. It was natural, it was even unavoidable, to take notice, in such a case, of the usurpation whereof they had been guilty upon their bishop, the chief shepherd, who had the oversight of all the under shepherds, the presbyters, as well as of the people, and to whom alone, if there had been such a person, those presbyters were accountable for their conduct. Yet there is not so much as a syllable in all this long letter that points this way. On the contrary, he argues from the power with which those presbyters themselves were vested, and of which they could not be justly stripped, whilst they discharged faithfully the duties of their office. I will appeal to any candid person who is tolerably conversant in Christian antiquities, whether he thinks it possible, that in the third century, such a letter, on such an emergence, could have been written to any Christian congregation, by any man in his senses, wherein there was no more notice taken of the bishop, who was then, in a manner, every thing in his own church, than if he were nothing at all. And that there was so great a difference, in less than two centuries, in people's style and sentiments on this article, is an uncontrovertible proof that, in that period, things came to stand on a very different foot. This epistle of Clement, who was a disciple of Paul, appears, indeed, from one passage, to have been

written so early as before the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, and, consequently, before the seventy-second year of Christ, according to the vulgar computation. And if so, it was written before the Apocalypse, and, perhaps, some other parts of the sacred canon. Nothing, therefore, that is not scripture, can be of greater authority in determining a point of fact, as is the question about the constitution of the apostolical church.

The other testimony I shall produce, is that of Polycarp, who had been a disciple of the apostle John, and must certainly have written his epistle to the Philippians a considerable time before the middle of the second century. He also takes notice only of two orders of ministers in the church, enjoining the people, chap. v. to be subject to their presbyters and deacons, as to God and Christ. He could go no higher for a similitude; nor could he decently have gone so high, had he known of a higher order in the church. Not a syllable of the bishop, who, in less than a hundred and fifty years after, would have been the principal, if not the only, person, to whom their subjection would have been enjoined by any Christian writer. Let it be observed farther, that though, in chap. v. he lays down the duties and qualifications of deacons, and, in chap. vi. those of presbyters, wherein every thing befitting judges and governors is included, and, through the whole epistle, those of the people, there is no mention of what is proper in the character and conduct of a bishop.

I shall remark here, by the way, that there is one very ancient author, Ignatius, who also comes within the denomination of the apostolic fathers, whose writings are supposed to have intervened between those of Clement and those of Polycarp, and whose authority is strongly urged on the opposite side. Of him I shall have occasion to take notice afterwards. I shall here only add, in regard to Polycarp, that what has been now observed of his epistle to the Philippians, is a full confutation of that hasty assertion of Dodwell [a], that the Christian writers, posterior to Ignatius, most accurately observe even the distinction of the names; to wit, of bishop and presbyter, of which he had been speaking. His words are, "Juniores autem Ig-"natio scriptores Christiani et nominum distinctionem obser-

[a] Paræn. 27.

"vant accuratissimam." It is evident, from the above quotation, that Polycarp knew of no Christian minister superior to the presbyters. If the bishop was of a different order, and yet included in the term, he has been as little observant of accuracy in the distinction of the names, as of propriety and decency in his injunctions on this head.

But there are other topics from which the episcopate has, by its warmest patrons, been supported, and which it will be proper to examine particularly in the following lectures. I shall in these also endeavour to trace (as far as at this distance of time it is practicable) the outline of the apostolic church, and inquire into the origin and progress of subordination in the pastors. It will be observed by the judicious and the candid, that what has been advanced, does not affect the lawfulness, or even, in certain circumstances, the expediency of the episcopal model; it only exposes the arrogance of pretending to a *jus divinum*. I am satisfied that no form of polity can plead such an exclusive charter as that phrase, in its present acceptation, is understood to imply. The claim is clearly the offspring of sectarian bigotry and ignorance. In regard to those polities which obtain at present in the different Christian sects, I own ingenuously, that I have not found one of all that I have examined, which can be said perfectly to coincide with the model of the apostolic church. Some, indeed, are nearer, and some are more remote; but this we may say with freedom, that, if a particular form of polity had been essential to the church, it had been laid down in another manner in the sacred books. The very hypothesis is, in my opinion, repugnant to the spiritual nature of the evangelical economy. It savours grossly of the conceit with which the Jews were intoxicated of the Messiah's secular kingdom,—a conceit with which many like-minded Christians are intoxicated still.

LECTURE V.

AFTER some considerations on the nature and consequence of the question about the polity originally established in the church, I discussed in the former lecture the principal topics relating to the equality of the pastors, at least in point of function and official duties. I observed also, in the conclusion of that discourse, that there were other topics, from which those who maintain a subordination among them, have endeavoured to defend their sentiments. Many, indeed, convinced by such arguments as were then adduced, that it is in vain to search for the office of bishop, as the word is understood by moderns, in those ministers ordained by the apostles in the churches which they founded, have referred us for its origin to the apostolate itself. I have passingly observed already, that this was one of those extraordinary offices, which were in their nature temporary, and did not admit succession. But this point, as so much stress is laid upon it, will deserve to be examined more particularly.

The apostles may be considered in a twofold view, either in their general character as the first pastors of the church, and teachers of the Christian faith, or in what is implied in their special character, of apostles of Jesus Christ.—In the first general view they are, doubtless, the predecessors of all those who, to the end of the world, shall preach the same gospel, and administer the same sacraments, by whatever name we distinguish them, bishops, priests, or deacons, overseers, elders, or ministers. But the question still recurs, Whether, agreeably to the primitive institution, their successors, in respect of the more common character of teachers and directors of the churches, should be divided into three orders, or only into two? To presume, without evidence, that the first, and not the second, was the fact, is merely what logicians call a *petitio principii*, taking

that for granted, which is the very point in debate. But if it be alleged, that not in the general character of teachers, but in their special function as apostles, the bishops are their proper successors, the presbyters and deacons being only the successors of those who were, in the beginning, ordained by the apostles, this point will require a separate discussion. And for this purpose, your attention is entreated to the following remarks.

First, the indispensable requisites in an apostle sufficiently demonstrate, that the office could be but temporary. It was necessary that he should be one who had seen Jesus Christ in the flesh, after his resurrection. Accordingly they were all specially destined to serve as eye-witnesses to the world of this great event, the hinge on which the truth of Christianity depended. The character of apostle is briefly described by Peter, who was himself the first of the apostolical college, as one ordained to be a witness of Christ's resurrection, Acts i. 22.; a circumstance of which he often makes mention in his speeches both to the rulers and to the people. See Acts ii. 32.; iii. 15.; v. 32.; x. 41.; xiii. 31. And if so, the office, from its nature and design, could not have an existence after the extinction of that generation.

Secondly, the apostles were distinguished by prerogatives which did not descend to any after them. Of this kind was, first, their receiving their mission immediately from the Lord Jesus Christ, not mediately through any human ordination or appointment; of this kind also was, secondly, the power of conferring, by imposition of hands, the miraculous gifts of the Spirit on whomsoever they would; and thirdly, the knowledge they had, by inspiration of the whole doctrine of Christ. It was for this reason they were commanded to wait the fulfilment of the promise which their Master had given them, that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost. What pains does not Paul take to show, that the above mentioned marks of an apostle belonged to him as well as to any of them? That he had seen Christ after his resurrection, and was consequently qualified, as an eye-witness, to attest that memorable event, he observes, 1 Cor. ix. 1.; xv. 8.: that his commission came directly from Jesus Christ and God the Father, without the in-

tervention of any human creature, he acquaints us, Gal. i. 1.; ii. 6. To his conferring miraculous powers as the signs of an apostle, he alludes, 2 Cor. xii. 12.; and that he received the knowledge of the gospel not from any other apostle, but by immediate inspiration, Gal. i. 11, &c.

Thirdly, their mission was of quite a different kind from that of any ordinary pastor. It was to propagate the gospel throughout the world, both among Jews and Pagans, and not to take the charge of a particular flock. The terms of their commission are, "Go and teach all nations." Again: "Go "ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every crea- "ture." No doubt they may be styled bishops or overseers, but in a sense very different from that in which it is applied to the inspector over the inhabitants of a particular district. They were universal bishops; the whole church, or rather, the whole earth was their charge, and they were all colleagues one of another. Or to give the same sentiment, in the words of Chrysostom, Εισιν ὑπο Θεου χειροτονηθεντες αποστολοι αρχοντες, ουκ εθνη και πολεις διαφορους λαμβανοντες, αλλα παντες κοινη την οικουμενην εμπιστευθεντες. "The apos- "tles were constituted of God, rulers, not each over a separate "nation or city, but all were entrusted with the world in com- "mon." If so, to have limited themselves to any thing less, would have been disobedience to the express command they had received from their Master, to go into all nations, and to preach the gospel to every creature. If, in the latter part of the lives of any of them, they were, through age and infirmities, confined to one place, that place would naturally fall under the immediate inspection of such. And this, if even so much as this, is all that has given rise to the tradition, (for there is nothing like historical evidence in the case) that any of them were bishops or pastors of particular churches. Nay, in some instances, it is plain, that the tradition has originated from this single circumstance, that the first pastors, in such a church, were appointed by such an apostle. Hence it has arisen, that the bishops of different churches have claimed (and, probably, with equal truth) to be the successors of the same apostle.

Fourthly and lastly, as a full proof that the matter was thus universally understood, both in their own age, and in the times immediately succeeding, no one, on the death of an apostle,

was ever substituted in his room, and when that original sacred college was extinct, the title became extinct with it. The election of Matthias by the apostles, in the room of Judas, is no exception, as it was previous to their entering on their charge. They knew it was their Master's intention, that twelve missionaries, from among those who had attended his ministry on the earth, should be employed as occular witnesses to attest his resurrection, on which the divinity of his religion depended. The words of Peter, on this occasion, are an ample confirmation of all that has been said, both in regard to the end of the office, and the qualifications requisite in the person who fills it, at the same time that they afford a demonstration of the absurdity as well as atrogance of modern pretenders. "Wherefore of these "men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord "Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism "of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, "must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resur-"rection." But afterwards, when the apostle James, the brother of John, was put to death by Herod, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, we find no mention made of a successor. Nor did the subsequent admission of Paul and Barnabas to the apostleship form any exception from what has been advanced; for they came not as successors to any one, but were specially called by the Holy Spirit as apostles, particularly to the Gentiles; and in them also were found the qualifications requisite for the testimony, which, as apostles, they were to give.

It is a similar subterfuge to recur to any of the other extraordinary ministers who were at that time in the church. It holds true of them all alike that their office was temporary, and the charge they had was universal: it extended to the whole church. Of this kind evidently was the office of evangelist, a title which, like apostle, fell with those who first enjoyed it. Such was Philip, such was Timothy, and such certainly was also Titus. The last mentioned, I own, is no where expressly called so. But from a proper attention to what we learn concerning him and Timothy, both in the Acts of the Apostles, and in Paul's epistles, we find their situations, services, and trusts, so perfectly to correspond, that we cannot hesitate a moment in affirming, that their functions were the same, and

that they both served as assistants to the apostle Paul. Such also, probably, were Mark and Luke. I do not here allude to the right they acquired to this title from the gospels which they wrote, but as due to them from having assisted some of the apostles in that capacity. Luke was long the companion of Paul; Mark is said to have attended Peter. And if he was a different person from this evangelist (about which some have doubted) John, surnamed Mark, ought also to be included, who for some time attended the apostles Paul and Barnabas, and after their separation, Barnabas.

The work of an evangelist appears to have been to attend the apostles in their journeys for the promulgation of the gospel, to assist them in the office of preaching, especially in places which the gospel had not reached before. This conveys the true distinction between the Greek words κηρυσσειν and ευαγγελιζειν, from which last the name evangelist is taken. The former signifies *to preach* in general, or proclaim the reign of the Messiah; the latter, though frequently rendered in the same way, denotes, properly, to declare the good news, that is, the gospel, to those who had before known nothing of the matter. The evangelists assisted also in settling the churches, always acting under the direction of the apostles, and bearing messages from them to those congregations which the apostles could not then personally visit, serving to supply their places in reforming abuses, and settling order. But the whole history manifestly proves, that their superintendency in particular places, was not stationary, and for life, but occasional and ambulatory. The words of Paul to Titus clearly show thus much. "For this "cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the "things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I "appointed thee." This is not the language of one who had assigned him this as his fixed station, but of one who had entrusted him with the execution of a special purpose, which the apostle could not then execute himself; and which, when Titus had executed, the sole intention of his presence there was accomplished. But, that they remained still in their extraordinary character of evangelists, and were still under the direction of those apostles whom they assisted in that capacity, appears also from this, that Paul enjoins Timothy to make dispatch, in

regard to the matters he was charged with in Asia, that he might be with him in Rome before the winter. As to Titus, he orders him to meet him at Nicopolis, in Macedonia, where he intended to pass the winter; and afterwards, he writes to Timothy, (for the second epistle to Timothy was posterior to the epistle to Titus) that Titus was gone to Dalmatia.

As to the dates or postscripts subjoined to the epistles in the common bibles, it is universally agreed, among the learned, that they are of no authority. They are not found in some of our best and most ancient manuscripts: they are not the same in all copies, and some of them are evidently false. The time in which they have been annexed, is not thought to have been earlier than the fifth century. We know how far at that time a species of vanity carried people, to trace the line of their pastors upwards, through a very dark period, to apostles and evangelists, supplying, by their guesses, the imperfections of tradition. Certain it is, that in the three first centuries, neither Timothy nor Titus is styled bishop by any writer. It also deserves to be remarked, that in the island of Crete, of which Titus is said, in the postscript of Paul's epistle to him, to have been ordained the first bishop, there were no fewer, according to the earliest accounts and catalogues extant, than eleven bishops. Hence it is that Titus has been called by some of the later fathers an archbishop; though few of the warmest friends of episcopacy pretend to give the archiepiscopal order so early a date. Yet it is not without some colour of reason that they have named him so; since he was appointed to ordain elders in every city, and had therefore a superintendency for the time over the whole island. Whereas it is well known, that in the earliest times of episcopacy, every city wherein there was a church, that is, wherein there were Christian converts enow, had its own bishop. Now if such was the case with Titus, he enjoyed an office there in which he had no succession; since in all the ancient history of the church, after the death of the extraordinary ministers, till the rise of the metropolitical jurisdiction, which was near two centuries afterwards, the bishop of a single congregation was the highest order known in the church. But our adversaries in this question do not reflect, that by making him a metropolitan, they deprive themselves of the only

plausible account that has been given on their side, why he got no directions concerning the consecration of bishops, namely, that he himself was the bishop. For being, in that island, by their hypothesis archbishop, he had several suffragans of the episcopal order, in whose ordination alone he was immediately concerned. The ordaining of presbyters and deacons was properly their work, and not his. Paul, on that supposition, omitted to give him instructions on the only point in which he had a concern. This holds still more evidently in regard to Timothy, whom the same persons have made primate, or rather patriarch, of the proconsular Asia, wherein there were many bishops. What excuse will their ingenuity invent for this repeated oversight of the apostle, in mentioning only two orders instead of three? Indeed, so little can the instructions, given by Paul to Timothy and Titus, be made to quadrate with any ordinary ministry that ever obtained in the church, that we are forced to conclude, with the learned Dr. Whitby, (see his preface to the epistle to Titus) that their's was extraordinary as well as temporary, and that they were not succeeded in it by any that came after them. But if we must have successors to those extraordinary missionaries, why do we not retain both their titles and their offices? And why have we not successors to them all? Why have we not still our apostles, and evangelists, and prophets, and governments, and tongues, and interpreters, and miracles, and discerners of spirits, as well as they? This would be no more than the native consequence of that principle, that we must have something corresponding and successive to offices which were then, by the wisdom of God, judged necessary for the subversion of idolatry, and the first publication of the faith.

It is of as little weight to urge, that committing the charge of ordaining presbyters and deacons to those extraordinary ministers, Timothy and Titus, was an evidence that there was no such power in the presbyters or bishops, as they are also called, who had been ordained in those places before. But how does it appear, that there had been any ordained in the churches, to which their charge then extended? The congregations, as was hinted already, were for some time left under the tutelage of those extraordinary ministers, the prophets and wise men who

happened to be among them. The first mention that is made of the ordination, or settlement, of elders in every city, is in the fourteenth chapter of the Acts, whereas many thousands had been converted to Christianity in different places long before. And that some of the churches to which Paul's epistles were directed, had no fixed ministry, is evident from the tenour of the epistles themselves, particularly from those written to the Corinthians. Now the directions given to both Timothy and Titus clearly shew, that they relate to the planting of churches, by supplying, for the first time, with stated pastors, those converts who had none before. This must have been done by the extraordinary ministers, if it was ever to be done at all: But when that was once effected, no other than ordinary means, to which the pastors to be ordained were equal, were requisite for the supply of occasional vacancies, and for preserving an order once established. Accordingly, the execution of the charge which Paul gave to Timothy, whereof the planting of churches, by supplying them with pastors, was a principal part, he denominates doing the work, not of a bishop, but of an evangelist, and fulfilling that ministry. Aaron, the first high-priest under the former dispensation, and after him Eleazar his son, were solemnly consecrated by Moses, who was an extraordinay minister, in as much as he was the steward and sole superintendant over the house of God. But was this ever understood to imply, that no succeeding priest, and especially no succeeding high-priest, could be legally consecrated by any who was inferior in office to Moses? Had that been the case, the priesthood must have expired with that generation. Moses, in his exalted station, had no successor. And till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, it might be justly said, "There arose not a prophet "since in Israel, like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face "to face." It was necessary indeed that he should lay the foundation of the Israelitish church, but that he should raise the superstructure was not necessary. To effect this was left to meaner hands. And the priesthood, once established, was sufficient of itself for filling up the voids that might be made by death, and other accidents. And is it reasonable to think, that the case, in this respect, would not be similar with the church of Christ? Hence it is evident, that all the arguments, in fa-

vour of the distinction, which are brought by Epiphanius, and others, from some passages in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, being built on a false hypothesis, must fall to the ground. They proceed upon the notion, that these were properly bishops in the modern acceptation; a notion utterly unknown to that Christian antiquity, which alone deserves the name of primitive; a notion, besides, incompatible with the authentic accounts we have concerning these extraordinary ministers, who were not made bishops till about five hundred years after their death.

There is only one other plea of any consequence in favour of the apostolical antiquity of episcopacy, which I shall now examine: I have reserved it for the last, because it affords an excellent handle for inquiring into the real origin of subordination among the Christian pastors. The plea I mean is taken from the epistles to the seven Asian churches in the Apocalypse, addressed to the angels of these churches severally, and in the singular number; to the angel of the church of Ephesus, and so of the rest. It appears from the first chapter of that book, that each epistle is intended for all the church or congregation mentioned in the direction or superscription. But one person, called the angel of that church, is addressed in name of the whole. This is evidently different from the uniform style both of the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's epistles. In them, as we have seen, the pastors in every church are always spoken of in the plural number. The same titles are used promiscuously of all, (except the deacons) as of persons quite co-ordinate in power and trust. Here, on the contrary, the singular number is used, and a name given which is not commonly applied to those in the ministry, ordinary or extraordinary. Angel properly denotes messenger or ambassador. It is the name usually assigned to the celestial spirits, as expressive of the relation they stand in to God. The infernal spirits are, in like manner, called the devil's angels. It is sometimes also used of men. Thus it is predicted in scripture concerning John the Baptist:—"Behold, "I send my angel before thee, who shall prepare thy way." But what shall we say of the import of the expression in that part of the Apocalypse now referred to? Shall we, with many, consider this unusual application of a name, and the adopting of the singular number in reference to the sacred office, though

but in one single book, and that a very mysterious and prophetical book, as a sufficient counterpoise to all the arguments in favour of the co-ordination of the pastors, taken from the uniform style of the plain and historical part of scripture, which informs us of the planting of churches; and from the familiar epistles of the apostles to those churches that had been planted, or to their assistants in the ministry? I do not think, that by any just rule of interpretation we can. This would be not to borrow light from the perspicuous passages, in order to dispel the darkness of the obscure, but to confound the light of the clearest passages, by blending it with the obscurity of the darkest.

Shall we then maintain with some zealous patrons of the presbyterian model, that in the sublime and allegorical style of prophecy a community is here personified and addressed as one man? Shall we affirm, that by the angel is meant the presbytery, which our Lord, the better to express the union that ought to subsist among the members, emphatically considers as one person? With this interpretation I am equally dissatisfied. It is indeed evident, that each of these epistles is ultimately intended for the congregation. The faults reprehended are therefore to be understood as the faults not of the minister or ministers peculiarly, but as the faults that predominated among the people, and with which both the pastors and the flock are more or less chargeable; and the warnings and admonitions, as given to them all. Accordingly, when there is a necessity of distinguishing the conduct of some from that of others, the plural number is adopted, as in chap. ii. 10.:—"Behold, the devil shall cast some of "*you* into prison, that *ye* may be tried." See also verses 13, 23, 24, and 25. But to understand by the name *angel*, another community, namely, that of the pastors, appears to me an unnatural supposition, which does violence to the text. Though we have instances, especially in precepts and denunciations, wherein a community is addressed by the singular pronouns *thou* and *thee*, I do not recollect such an use of an appellative as the application of the word *angel* here would be, on the hypothesis of those interpreters. But is there no medium? Must the angel of each church here addressed be of an order differing from that of the other ministers, and superior to it, or must it imply their

collective body? To me an intermediate opinion, which has been adopted by some critics, appears much more probable than either. My sentiment therefore is, that, as in their consistories and congregations, it would be necessary, for the sake of order, that one should preside, both in the offices of religion, and in their consultations for the common good, it is their president or chairman that is here addressed under the name of angel. A regulation of this kind all sorts of societies are led to adopt from necessity, in order to prevent confusion in conducting business; and those Christian societies would also fall into it by example. They had adopted the name πρεσβυτεριον, presbytery or senate, from the name frequently given to the Jewish sanhedrim. The term πρεσβυτερος, elder or senator, they had also borrowed from the title given to the members of that council. Nothing could be more natural, than to derive from that court also the practice of conducting their affairs more decently and expeditiously by the help of a president.

Let it not be imagined that I mean to signify, that the presbytery was formed on the model of the sanhedrim, because they adopted the same name. This, far from being necessary, is not even probable. Their different uses and purposes must suggest the propriety of many differences in their structure and procedure. But on the first erection of this Christian senate, or council, they could hardly fail to take as much of the form of the Jewish, as was manifestly of equal convenience in both. It still adds to the probability of this, that in the synagogue from which many of the terms used in the church in those early times were borrowed, he who presided in conducting the worship, and in directing the reading of the law, was styled the angel of the congregation.

An example they likewise had in the apostolical college itself, in which Peter appears, by the appointment of his master, to have presided; though in no other particular was he endowed with any power or privilege not conferred on the rest, who were, in respect of apostleship, his colleagues and equals. I shall not detain you with entering into the controversy that has been so much laboured between Protestants and Papists, and of the latter, between some more and some less papistical, in regard to the prerogatives of Peter. I think it has been made

sufficiently manifest, that there was not any kind of power conferred on him, in which his fellow-apostles were not sharers with him. He is indeed made a principal foundation of the church [a]; but they are also foundations [b]; for the house of God is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets; and on the twelve foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem were inscribed the names of the twelve apostles [c]. The power of binding and loosing, that is, of pronouncing, without danger of error, the sentence of God in either retaining or remitting sins, was indeed first conferred upon Peter [d], but afterwards, as we learn in other passages, particularly from the apostle John [e], on all the eleven. Yet I think it would be putting a forced construction on the words used by Christ, when Peter first confessed his faith in him as the Messiah, and had his name changed from Simon to Cephas, or Peter, that is, Rock, to affirm, that they convey to this apostle no pre-eminence or distinction whatever. For though we are taught from scripture to consider the declarations made to Peter as being also applicable to them all, still they are to be regarded as most eminently applicable to him, to whom, in the singular number, our Lord, in the audience of the rest, addressed himself in this manner: "I say to thee,"—and "I will give to "thee." The confession which Peter made was doubtless the confession of them all. They were therefore all made partakers of the same benefits. But as Peter's zeal had led him to be, as it were, their mouth, in making this profession to his master, Christ, after the effusion of the Spirit, honoured him to be their mouth also, in first preaching this doctrine, and giving testimony for him to the Jews, and afterwards, by the special call of God, to the uncircumcised Gentiles. It is thus this apostle himself speaks of it:—"Brethren, ye know that God "made choice among us, that the Gentiles, by my mouth, "should hear the word of the gospel." This is called, in another place, "opening the door of faith to the Gentiles," and affords a natural exposition of Christ's declaration to Peter, "I give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Yet even here there is nothing peculiar given to Peter, but merely that

[a] Matt. xvi. 18. [b] Eph. ii. 20. [c] Rev. xxi. 14.
[d] Matt. xvi. 19. [e] Matt. xviii. 18.—John xx. 23.

he should be honoured to be the first. In the conversion of the Gentiles afterwards, Paul was incomparably more eminent than he.

That Peter, however, was considered as the president of that college, appears from several particulars. One is, he is not only always named first in the gospels, and in the Acts, but by Matthew, who was also an apostle, he is called Πρωτος, *the first*, which I imagine is equivalent to president or chief. Πρωτος Σιμων, —the first Simon. It is not the adverb πρωτον, that is used here, which would have barely implied, that the historian began with his name, but the adjective or epithet πρωτον. This is the more remarkable, that he was not first called to the apostleship, for his brother Andrew was called before him, as we learn from the gospel of John. There is hardly therefore any other sense, than that now given, that can be put upon the expression. Sometimes when the apostles are spoken of, Peter alone is named. Thus: "Tell his disciples and Peter." I acknowledge, however, that as another reason may be assigned for the distinction that is made in this passage, very little stress can be laid on it. Again: "Peter stood up with the eleven." "They said to Peter and the rest of the apostles." And of the three whom our Lord, on some occasions, distinguished from the rest, honouring them to be witnesses of his transfiguration, his raising from the dead Jairus's daughter, and his agony in the garden, Peter is not only one, but invariably named first. Paul indeed once, in mentioning those three, arranges them otherwise, (Gal. ii. 9.) *James*, *Cephas*, and *John*. It appears, however, from this very passage, that Paul considered him as the head of the twelve. When he says the gospel of the circumcision was committed to Peter, it is evident that he is particularized by way of eminence, for no person can doubt that Peter had this ministry in common with the other eleven. And in taking notice of the success of the gospel among the Jews, Peter alone is again named as the great instrument God had employed for that purpose. And in another place, he mentions his own visit to the mother church at Jerusalem, as made peculiarly to Peter, with whom he abode fifteen days. These, I acknowledge, are but slight circumstances taken severally, but taken in conjunction, they are strong enough for supporting all

that I intend to build upon them. For nothing is here ascribed to him as peculiar but the presidentship, or the first place in the discharge of the functions of an apostle common to them all. He was not among the apostles as a father among his children, of a different rank, and of a superior order, but as an elder brother among his younger brothers, the first of the same rank and order. "Be not ye called rabbi," said Jesus to the twelve, some time after the honourable declaration made to Peter, "for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are bre-" thren; and call no man your father upon the earth, for one "is your father, who is in heaven." It is perhaps unnecessary to add, that whatever was conferred on Peter was merely personal, and could descend to none after him. This indeed is an unavoidable consequence of another point, that the apostolate itself was personal, and did not admit succession, which I have proved to you in the preceding part of this discourse. As to Dodwell's notion of the presidency of the apostle James, the son of Alpheus, otherwise James the Less, also called the Lord's brother, and supposed to have been the first bishop of Jerusalem, and likewise of the temporary primacy, first of the church of Jerusalem, afterwards of the church of Ephesus, I have taken notice of both in another place.

Some keen controvertists on the Protestant side would be apt to censure what has been now advanced in regard to the apostle Peter, as yielding too much to the Romanist. Yet in fact nothing at all is yielded. The bishop of Rome has no more claim to be the successor of Peter, than the bishop of London has, or indeed any pastor in the church. It is but too commonly the effect, though a very bad effect, of religious controversy, that impartiality and even judgment are laid aside by both parties, and each considers it as his glory to contradict the other as much, and to recede from his sentiments as far as possible. One is afraid of every thing that looks like concession: it is like losing ground in a battle. For when once unhappily the controversial spirit has gotten possession of a man, his object is no longer truth but victory. Against this evil I would warn you, my young friends, as much as possible. Revere truth above all things wherever ye find it. Attend coolly and candidly to the voice of reason, from what quarter soever it

comes. Let not the avenues to your understanding be choked up with prejudices and prepossessions, but be always open to conviction.

Now, though, what has been advanced in regard to the apostolate should not be deemed sufficiently established, yet that one, on account either of seniority, or of superior merit habitually presided in the presbytery, will still remain probable, for the other reasons assigned, the obvious conveniency of the thing, the commonness of it in all sorts of councils and conventions; particularly in the sanhedrim and synagogue, the only rational account, that, in a consistency with other parts of sacred writ, or with any Christian relics of equal antiquity, can be given of the address, in the singular number, to the pastors of the seven churches severally in the Apocalypse; and I may add, the most plausible account which it affords of the origin of the more considerable distinction that afterwards obtained between bishop and presbyter. The whole of life shows us, that from the most trivial causes the greatest effects sometimes proceed. History in particular evinces this truth, and no sort of history more remarkably than the ecclesiastical.

It may further be observed, in support of the same doctrine, that some of the most common appellations, whereby the bishop was first distinguished, bear evident traces of this origin. He was not only called προεστως, but προεδρος, president, chairman; and by periphrasis the presbyters were called 'οι εκ του δευτερου θρονου, they who possessed the second seat or throne, as the bishop was πρωτοκαθεδρος, he who possessed the first. Thus he was in the presbytery, as the speaker in the house of commons, who is not of a superior order to the other members of the house, but is a commoner among commoners, and is only, in consequence of that station, accounted the first among those of his own rank. The same thing might be illustrated by the prolocutor of either house of convocation in England, or the moderator of an ecclesiastical judicatory in Scotland. Now as the president is, as it were, the mouth of the council, by which they deliver their judgment, and by which they address themselves to others, it is natural to suppose, that through the same channel, to wit, their president, they should be addressed by others. A letter therefore to the congregation might very naturally be direct-

ed to him who possessed the first place, and presided among them.

But it may be said, Is not this at most but a plausible conjecture, and not a proof? I acknowledge, indeed, that the point does not admit so positive a proof as might be wished. But in a case of this kind, the most plausible conjecture, as it is all that can be had, will be accounted sufficient by a reasonable man for determining the question. This solution appears to me the best, because it puts no undue stretch upon the words, and is perfectly compatible with that equality in power and order, which the uniform style of the Acts and the epistles, in the promiscuous application of the same appellatives, and in the use of the plural number on such occasions, proves to have subsisted among the pastors first settled by the apostles and evangelists. This equality is, in my opinion, strongly supported. It is only the solution now given of the difficulty, arising from the noted passage in the Apocalypse, that I admit to be conjectural. And all I plead in its favour is, that of all the conjectures I have seen on that article, it is the most likely.

It was doubtless the distinction of one pastor in every church, marked by this apostle, though not made by any who had written before him, which has led Tertullian, whose publications first appeared but about a century after the apostles, to consider him as the institutor of episcopacy. These are his words, (lib. iv. adv. Marcionem,) "Ordo tamen episcoporum ad originem "recensus, in Joannem stabit auctorem;" which Bingham (Christian Antiquities, b. ii. chap. 1. sect. 3.) translates thus: —"The order of bishops, when it is traced up to its original, "will be found to have St. John for one of its authors." A palpable misinterpretation of our antiquary. Tertullian says expressly, "Our inquiries into the origin of the episcopal order "terminate in John the author." Had that father said, "Mundus ad originem recensus, in Deum stabit creatorem;" would Bingham have rendered it, "The world, when it is "traced up to its original, will be found to have God for one "of its creators?" I cannot allow myself to think it. Yet the interpolation in rendering *creatorem* one of its creators, is not more flagrant, than in rendering *auctorem* one of its authors. By this version he avoids showing what is extremely plain from

the words, that Tertullian did not think there was any subordination in the pastors of the churches instituted by the other apostles. Else how should he refer us to John, of whom, though an eminent propagator of the faith, we have not such particular accounts as of some of his colleagues? If he had discovered any traces of such a disparity in the settling of the churches, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, or mentioned in the epistles of Paul, it is impossible he should have referred us solely to John, of whom we have so little information, as the author. But this opinion he has evidently founded on the Apocalypse, a book mentioned by him in the same sentence. Now if he thought that that apostle gave a model to the churches established by him, which the other apostles had not given to theirs, (though in after-times it came to be universally adopted) we must conclude, at least, that he did not consider any particular external form as essential to the Christian church, but as a thing entirely discretionary in the several founders. And that this was his opinion, appears at least probable from this, that he had mentioned John's paternal care of certain churches in the preceding sentence, which he therefore considered as peculiarly his. "Habemus et Joannis alumnas ecclesias." To me, however, it is more likely, that John, in the direction of the epistles to the seven churches, availed himself of a distinction, which had subsisted from the beginning, but as it implied no difference in order and power, was too inconsiderable to be noticed in the history. This I think at least more credible, than that either the church was new modelled by this apostle, or that the different apostles adopted different plans.

In my next lecture, I shall make a few more observations on the constitution of the apostolic church, and on the nature and character of episcopacy, which obtained in the second and third centuries; and shall, in that and some subsequent discourses, proceed in tracing the progress of the hierarchy from the latent and inconsiderable seeds or principles whence it sprang, to the amazing height it at length arrived at.

LECTURE VI.

THE purpose of this lecture is to make a few more observations on the constitution of the apostolic church, and on the nature of the episcopacy which obtained in the second and third centuries.

When the gospel was preached by the apostles throughout the different cities and countries into which they travelled, wherever they made as many converts as would be sufficient to form a congregation, they caused them to unite together for this purpose; and with the first convenient opportunity, settled (as Clemens Romanus expresses it) bishops and deacons among them, for instructing them more fully, both publicly and privately, for guiding them by their counsel in every doubtful or difficult exigence, and for conducting more regularly in their assemblies the public worship and ordinances. When the disciples in any place were not numerous enough to form a congregation by themselves, they united them to that which was nearest. To the congregation they gave the name ἐκκλησια, which is commonly rendered *church*.

The deacons, who seem at first to have been chosen merely in consequence of a particular exigence, as we learn from Acts vi. 1, &c. to wit, for the inspection of the poor, and the distribution of the charitable collections, were admitted very early, probably in the time of the apostles, to an inferior part in the sacred ministry, such as attending the pastors in the discharge of the religious offices, and acting under their direction. The deaconship served in fact as a noviciate to the ministry.

The bishops or presbyters (for these terms, as we have seen, were then used synonymously) appear to have been all perfectly co-ordinate in ministerial powers. That a certain priority or presidentship, for order's sake, and in deference either to seniority, or to distinguishable talents, was allowed to one of their

number, is probable for the reasons assigned in my last discourse. That the pastors were from the beginning vested with a superintendency over the congregation purely in what concerned spiritual matters, cannot be questioned. Some of the titles that are given them in scripture, ἡγουμενοι, προεσταμενοι, guides, governors, undoubtedly imply thus much, as do also the terms in which the duty of the people to their pastors is recommended; πειθεσθε, ὑπεικετε, obey, submit, which manifestly require a respectful observance on their part. For this reason I imagine, that the generality of those modern sects, which have adopted the congregational, or independent plan, as it is called, have gone to an extreme, though not the most common extreme, in bringing the pastoral authority too low.

It is however certain, that when authority of any kind is unattended with what are commonly called coercive measures, or the power of the sword, and unsupported by temporal splendour, or worldly sanctions, it is impossible to preserve it otherwise amongst an enlightened people, than by purity of character in those vested with it, and by diligence in the discharge of the duties of their station. In such cases, this is the only foundation on which the respect, obedience, and submission of others can be raised. It was therefore a pertinent advice that Paul gave to Timothy, however oddly it may appear at first:—"Let "no man despise thee." For we may justly say, that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, if a pastor is despised, he has himself to blame. All however that I purpose, by quoting the aforesaid titles and commands, is to show, that in what related to the peculiar duties of their office, a reverential attention was acknowledged to be due to them,* as the guides and guardians of the flock.

There were some things, however, which, from the beginning, were conducted in common, by the pastors, the deacons, and the whole congregation. This appears particularly and most properly to have been the case in all matters of scandal and offence. In regard to these, it is the community, that, in strictness of speech, is offended. The very word scandal or stumbling-block implies this. It is the community, therefore, that ought to be satisfied. It is to them our Lord appears (Matth. xviii. 15, &c.) to have committed the charge of admonishing de-

linquents, and even of excommunicating obstinate offenders. But I shall have occasion to examine the import of that passage in the gospel afterwards. Only it may be further observed, in confirmation of what has been now advanced, that the earliest practice of the church was conformable to the interpretation now given. Clement, in the epistle above quoted, (chap. liv.) calls church censures τα προςτασσομενα 'υπο τε πληθους, the things commanded by the multitude, that is, the congregation.

Another point, in which they had doubtless all a share, was the election of their pastors and deacons. That the deacons were at first chosen by the people, is manifest from the account we have of their institution above referred to. Yet this point, however clear in its origin, seems very clearly to have undergone a change. In regard to the choice of pastors, the matter is not so plain. Some expressions in ancient authors seem to favour the opinion, that these also were constituted in consequence of the election of the people. Other expressions favour more the notion, that the choice was in the presbytery, who proposed the candidate they had elected to the people; and that the people had the power of rejecting, without assigning a reason, when they did not approve the choice. It is not improbable, that different methods, in this respect, obtained in different congregations. From scripture we have not sufficient ground for concluding positively on either side. Clement, in the forecited epistle, seems to favour the second opinion. The passage I allude to is in chap. xliv. where, speaking of the pastors, he uses this expression: "Those who were constituted by the "apostles, and afterwards by other eminent men, with the con- "sent of the whole congregation."—συνευδοκησασης της εκκλησιας πασης.

It is not to be imagined, that among people so artless, and at the same time so charitable, as we have reason to think the first Christian societies actually were, the bounding lines of the powers and privileges of the different orders would be accurately chalked out. It is more than probable, that the people, in a perfect reliance on the knowledge, zeal, and experience of their pastors, would desire, before every thing, to know whom they, who were the fittest judges, and had the same object in view, would think proper to recommend; and that, on the other hand, the pastors, having nothing so much at heart as the edification

of the people, would account their disapprobation of a candidate a sufficient reason for making another choice. It is indeed certain, as appears by the epistles of Cyprian, which were written about the middle of the third century, that for the three first ages of the church, though most matters came at last to be previously discussed in the presbytery, where some judgment was formed concerning them, no final resolution was taken in any affair of moment, without communicating it to the people, and obtaining their approbation. I signified before, that the presbytery, of which there is frequent mention in the ancient fathers, consisted not only of the presbyters, with their president, to whom the name bishop, at first common to them all, came soon to be appropriated, but also of the deacons.

It has, in modern times, been made a question, whether the presbyters, even exclusive of their president, could all come under one denomination; or whether some of them were properly pastors and teachers, and others only assistants in matters of government and discipline. Some keen advocates for presbytery, as the word is now understood, on the model of John Calvin, have imagined they discovered this distinction in these words of Paul to Timothy, (1 Tim. v. 17.)—"Let the elders "that rule well be counted worthy of double honour; especially "they who labour in the word and doctrine." Here, say they, is a two-fold partition of the officers comprised under the same name, into those who rule, and those who labour in the word and doctrine, that is, into ruling elders and teaching elders. To this it is replied, on the other side, that the *especially* is not intended to indicate a different office, but to distinguish from others those who assiduously apply themselves to the most important, as well as the most difficult, part of their office, public teaching; that the distinction intended is therefore not official, but personal; that it does not relate to a difference in the powers conferred, but solely to a difference in their application. It is not to the persons who have the charge, but to those who labour in it, οἱ κοπιῶντες. And to this exposition, as far the most natural, I entirely agree. What was affirmed before, in relation to the coincidence of the office of bishop and presbyter, from the uniform and promiscuous application of the same names and titles, may doubtless be urged, in the present case, with

still greater strength. The distinction is too considerable between a pastor and a lay-elder, as it is called, to be invariably confounded under one common name. When the character of such as are proper for the office of elder is pointed out by Paul to Timothy [a], apt to teach, or fit for teaching, διδακτικος, is mentioned as an essential quality; and though the words be different in the charge to Titus [b], the same thing is implied, ἱνα δυνατος ᾐ και παρακαλειν εν τη διδασκαλια τη ὑγιαινουση και τους αντιλεγοντας ελεγχειν, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. This is spoken indiscriminately of all who were proper to be nominated bishops or elders, which we cannot suppose would have been done, if part of them were to have no concern in teaching. We find no such quality among those mentioned as necessary in deacons. And a dubious, not to say a forced, exposition of a single passage of scripture, is rather too small a circumstance, whereon to found a distinction of so great consequence. If, therefore, it were only from this passage that an argument could be brought for the admission of those denominated laymen to a share in the management of church affairs, I, for my part, should most readily acknowledge, that our warrant for the practice would be extremely questionable. But I shall have occasion to consider this afterwards.

In the second century, it is very plain, that a settled distinction, in several respects, obtained between the bishop and his colleagues in the presbytery, for as yet they may still be called colleagues. Many titles which had before been common to them all, came at length to be appropriated to him who was considered as their head, such as επισκοπος, ἡγεμων, προεστως, πρωτοκαθεδρος, προεσταμενος, ποιμην, and some others. Though names are but sounds, those who are conversant in the history of mankind will readily allow, that they have greater influence on the opinions of the generality of men, than most people are aware of. Besides, it is of the nature of power, unless guarded by a watchful jealousy, (rarely to be found in unexperienced and undesigning people) to accumulate and gather strength. Distinguish one at first but by a small degree of superiority, and the distinction you have made will very soon, and as it were na-

[a] 1 Tim. iii. 2. [b] Tit. i. 9.

turally, carry other distinctions along with it. There is something here that resembles gravitation in material things. As the quantity of matter increases, its attractive force increases, and it more easily draws other matter to itself.

Some have represented it as an insuperable objection to the presbyterian hypothesis, concerning the rise of episcopal superiority, that it seems to imply so great ambition in one part, and so great supineness (not to give it a worse name) in the rest of the primitive pastors, ordained by the apostles, and by the apostolic men that came after them, as is perfectly incredible: this they seem to think a demonstration *a priori*, that the thing is impossible. Let it be observed, that I have all along admitted an original distinction, which, though very different from that which in process of time obtained, served for a foundation to the edifice. And so far am I from thinking that the ambition, or the vices, of the first ministers gave rise to their authority, that I am certain, that this effect is much more justly ascribed to their virtues. An aspiring disposition rouses jealousy—jealousy puts people on their guard. There needs no more to check ambition, whilst it remains unarmed with either wealth or power. But there is nothing which men are not ready to yield to distinguished merit, especially when matters are in that state wherein every kind of pre-eminence, instead of procuring wealth and secular advantages, exposes but to greater danger, and to greater suffering. Even the small distinction of being accounted the first in the society, and, as it were, the senior brother among the pastors, would be a strong incitement to a faithful and zealous minister to distinguish himself, by being the first also in every difficulty, and in every danger. This would beget in the people a more implicit deference to his judgment, and respect to his person. A deference at first merely paid to virtue, comes at last, through the gradual operation of habit, to be considered as due to office. What was gratuitously conferred on the meritorious predecessor, is claimed by the undeserving successor as a right. And the very principles of our nature tend to favour the claim. But when ease and affluence succeed to danger and distress, then indeed ambition on the one side, and dependance on the other, will be able to secure what virtue alone could earn. Such is

the ordinary progression of human things. Similar to this, if traced backwards, will be found the origin of almost all the governments that are not founded in conquest.

It were easy, on the same ground with those objectors, to evince *a priori*, (if a specious declamation on a sort of general principles, which pay no regard to fact and testimony, could evince) that monarchy, or the dominion of one man over innumerable multitudes of men, who, taken severally, may be his equals, both in understanding, and in bodily strength, is, in the nature of things, impossible. But how do all such futile reasonings vanish, like shadows, before the torch of history. This I observe only by the way, not that I think the steps so difficult to imagine, by which this ecclesiastic power has first arisen. For example, from making their president a man of great consequence among them, the transition is easy to their making his concurrence in all measures a *conditio sine quâ non*; that is to say, their considering every step as invalid that is done against his judgment. It is but one step further, and every thing becomes valid which bears the stamp of his authority. Now if, in this manner, the president had been raised in the churches of some principal cities, these would soon become a standard to the rest. And to their first rising in such cities to this pre-eminence, analogy to the civil government (as appears both from the testimony of antiquity, and from the reason of the thing) did not a little contribute. In this judgment we can plead the concurrence of some of our keenest antagonists. "Civitatum "Romanorum," says Dodwell, "Græcarumque disciplinam in "civitatem ecclesiastica etiam administratione observatam con- "stat e Tertulliani aliquantisper coævo Origine. Sic enim "ille illas invicem contendit, ut partes partibus etiam respon- "derent." Thus he who presided was considered as corresponding in ecclesiastic matters to their prefect, proconsul, or chief magistrate, by whatever title he was distinguished; the presbytery to their senate or council, and the congregation to the comitia, or convention of the people. I make no doubt, as Jerome plausibly supposes, that the acquiescence of the people would be given the more readily, from the consideration of the expediency of such an arrangement for preserving union. When one and the same congregation was under the direction

of a plurality of pastors entirely equal, unless there were an umpire, to whose decision they were all considered as under an obligation to submit, there might be some danger of a rupture, in case their sentiments should jar. But we shall see in the sequel, (what is fully as unaccountable) that from causes perfectly similar, to wit, an allowed presidentship in synods and councils to the bishops of the capitals of provinces, kingdoms, regions, and of the empire itself; and from the gradual appropriation of titles, formerly common, arose insensibly the real presidency of metropolitical, patriarchal, and even papal power.

The first ecclesiastical author who mentions bishop, presbyter, and deacon, as three distinct orders of church-officers, is Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, who is supposed to have written about the sixteenth year of the second century, and by some even sooner. Indeed, several of the epistles ascribed to him, are now acknowledged, by critics of all denominations, to be spurious, and some of the rest are admitted, even by his ablest advocates, to be interpolated; insomuch, that it would not be easy to say how we could, with safety, found a decision on an author, with whose works transcribers, in the judgment of both sides, have made so free. What makes his testimony the more to be suspected is, first, because the fore-mentioned distinction is so frequently and officiously obtruded on the reader, sometimes not in the most modest and becoming terms, as was the manner of the apostles, when speaking of their own authority; and obedience is enjoined to the bishop and presbyters, even where the injunction cannot be deemed either natural or pertinent, as in his epistle to Polycarp, who was himself a bishop: secondly, because the names bishop and presbyter are never used by him for expressing the same office, as they had been uniformly used by all who had preceded him, and were occasionally used by most of the ecclesiastic writers of that century: thirdly and principally, because Polycarp, a contemporary and survivor of Ignatius, in a letter to the Philippians, quoted in a former discourse, pointing out the duties of all ranks, pastors and people, makes mention of only two orders of ministers, to wit, presbyters and deacons, in the same manner as Luke, and Paul, and Clement, had done before him; nay, and recommends to the people submission to them, and only to them, in terms which I

must say, were neither proper, nor even decent, if these very ministers had a superior in the church, to whom they themselves, as well as the people, were subject. To me the difference between these two writers appears by no means as a diversity in style, but as a repugnancy in sentiment. They cannot be both made applicable to the same state of the church. So that we are forced to conclude, that in the writings of one, or the other, there must have been something spurious or interpolated. Now I have heard no argument urged against the authenticity of Polycarp's letter, equally cogent as some of the arguments employed against the authenticity of the epistles of Ignatius. And indeed the state of the church, in no subsequent period, can well account for such a forgery as the epistle of the former to the Philippians; whereas the ambition of the ecclesiastics, for which some of the following centuries were remarkable, renders it extremely easy to account for the nauseous repetition of obedience and subjection to the bishop, presbyters, and deacons, to be found in the letters of Ignatius.

The way in which Dodwell accounts for it, (though in itself not implausible) is very singular, as his sentiments are on many subjects. He says, that it was because the bishop's authority was at that time a perfect novelty, totally unknown in the church, that Ignatius found it necessary to exert himself to the utmost, to recommend and establish it. According to this modern, the power and all the prerogatives of bishops were a mere upstart of the second century, after the death of all the apostles, and after the compilement of the canonical scriptures. It is in vain, therefore, he acknowledges, to look for any trace of episcopal authority in the New Testament. In the days of the apostles, it was not by prelacy that the church was governed, but by a species of popery, with which, if I mistake not, Mr. Dodwell was the first who brought the world acquainted. The pope was not the apostle Peter, but the apostle James; the papal throne was erected not at Rome, but at Jerusalem; and, after the destruction of this city by the Romans, transferred to Ephesus; and when finally suppressed, the episcopacy was reared upon its ruins. Yet of this episcopacy, though neither coeval with the Christian religion, nor of apostolical institution, for it did not obtain till after the death of John, the last of the

apostles, and of which we cannot have scriptural evidence, as it did not exist till several years after the finishing of the canon, the absolute necessity since the sixth year of the second century, and no sooner, is such, that without it there is no church of Christ, no salvation of men. Damnation or annihilation is all the prospect that remains even for those who believe and obey the gospel. For the rejection of an innovation which has no place there, and of which all the sacred writers were ignorant, can never imply either disbelief or disobedience of the gospel. But why, it may be said, detail extravagancies, more like the ravings of a disordered brain, than the sober deductions of a mind capable of reflection? I should indeed have thought the task unnecessary, if experience had not proved, that even such extravagancies have sometimes been productive of infinite mischief. If Dodwell, with all his learning, had not been a perfect idolater of his own eccentric imagination, he could not have acquiesced in a system so chimerical, so ill-compacted, so destitute of every kind of proof, external or internal, and to which all the sources of evidence, hitherto known in theological controversy, reason, scripture, and tradition, are equally repugnant. If it had been his express object to produce a scheme which might outdo even the Romish, not only in absurdity but in malignity, he could not have succeeded better. His unceasing cry was schism; yet in the scriptural sense, a greater schismatic than himself the age did not produce. Whose doctrine was ever found more hostile to that fundamental principle, declared by our Lord to be the criterion of our Christianity, mutual love? Whose doctrine ever was more successful in planting, by means of uncharitable and self-opinioned judgments, the principle of hatred in its stead? The test to which scripture points is, Does the teaching in question alienate the hearts of Christians, or unite them? Does it conciliate the affections where differences have unhappily arisen? or does it widen the breach? If the former, the spirit is Christian; if the latter, schismatical. The former is not more productive of *charity*, the end of the commandment, or gospel-covenant, and the bond of perfectness, than the latter is of its opposite, malignity, the source of discord, the parent of intolerance and persecution. It would be unjust not to add, in extenuation of the guilt of those

who mistake bigotry for zeal, what our Lord pleaded in behalf of his murderers, *They know not what they do.* This charity, where there appears the smallest scope for it, is due even to the uncharitable. In regard to vital religion, it is to be regretted, that men, even of talents and science, often show little penetration, rarely going deeper than the surface. *The natural man* (saith Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 14. more properly the *animal man*, ψυχικὸς, not φυσικὸς ανθρωπος) *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* Their acquaintance is merely with the outside: they break their teeth upon the shell, without reaching the kernel.

But to return to Ignatius, I say not that the epistles in question ought to be rejected in the lump, but that undue freedoms have been used even with the purest of them, by some over zealous partizans of the priesthood. They have, in many things, a remarkable coincidence with the sentiments repeatedly inculcated in the Apostolic Constitutions, a compilation probably begun in the third century, and ended in the fourth or fifth. Among the writers of the second age, I shall mention also Ireneus, who is supposed to have written about the middle of the second century, and in whose writings the names bishop and presbyter, and others of the like import, are sometimes used indiscriminately. I acknowledge, however, that the distinction of these, as of different orders, began about this time generally to prevail: the difference was not indeed near so considerable as it became afterwards. Accordingly, Ireneus talks in much the same style of both. What at one time he ascribes to bishops, at another he ascribes to presbyters: he speaks of each in the same terms, as entitled to obedience from the people, as succeeding the apostles in the ministry of the word, as those by whom the apostolic doctrine and traditions had been handed down. Thus (lib. iii. chap. 2.) he says, concerning the heretics of his time, "Cum autem ad eam iterum traditionem quæ est "ab apostolis, quæ per successiones presbyterorum in ecclesiis "custoditur, provocamus eos, qui adversantur traditioni, dicent "se non solum presbyteris, sed etiam apostolis existentes sa"pientiores, synceram invenisse veritatem."—Here not only are the presbyters mentioned as the successors of the apostles, but

in ranging the ministries, no notice is taken of any intervening order, such as that of the bishops. It is not always easy to say, whether by the two appellations, bishop and presbyter, Ireneus means the same order, or different orders. In the former case he would appear to make no distinction, and in the latter very little between them. Dr. Pearson admits, (which by the way is contradicted by Dodwell) that the names bishop and presbyter, are often interchanged by this father, and others of his time, even to the end of the century. This, however, he maintains, happened only when they spoke of the ministry in general terms, or mentioned those ministers in particular who had preceded them; affirming that, in regard to their own contemporaries, the offices of individuals are never thus confounded. A man, who was in their time a bishop, is not called a presbyter, nor is a presbyter called a bishop. I admit the truth of this remark, and consider it as a very strong confirmation of the doctrine I have been defending. For what reasonable account can be given of this manner (otherwise chargeable with the most unpardonable inaccuracy) but by saying, that in the time of the predecessors of Ireneus, there was no distinction worthy of notice in the ministry; whereas, in his own time, the distinction began to be marked by peculiar powers and prerogatives. If this had not been the case, it was as little natural as excusable, to be less accurate in speaking of those that went before, than in speaking of the people of his own time. Was it ever observed of writers in the fourth and fifth centuries, to come no lower, that they in this manner confounded the different ecclesiastical offices of the third? Is Cyprian, for instance, in any succeeding age, styled a presbyter of Carthage, or Rogatian the bishop? Are not their respective titles as uniformly observed in after ages as in their own?

But to return to the epistles of Ignatius, it is not only what we find singular in them, for so early a period, relating to the different orders of ministers in the church, which has raised suspicions of their authenticity, or at least of their integrity; there are other causes which have co-operated in producing the same effect; one is, the style in many places is not suited to the simplicity of the times immediately succeeding the times of the apostles. It abounds with inflated epithets, unlike the humble

manner of the inspired writers; and in this, as in other respects, seems more formed on that which became fashionable after the acquisition of greater external importance, which opulence never fails to bring, and after the discussion of certain theological questions agitated in the third and fourth centuries, to which we find, sometimes, a manifest allusion. What I am going to observe has much the appearance of anachronism, which often betrays the hand of the interpolator. The expression, *the church which is in Syria*, occurs twice. Now nothing can be more dissimilar to the dialect which had prevailed in the apostolic age, and which continued to prevail in the second century. Except when *the church* denoted the whole Christian community, it meant no more than a single congregation. Of this I shall have occasion to take notice presently. Now there were many churches in Syria in the days of Ignatius, and many bishops. Indeed when, through the increase of converts, a bishop's parish came to contain more people than could be comprehended in one congregation, the custom continued, in contradiction to propriety, of still calling his charge *a church*, in the singular number. But it was not till after the distinction made between the metropolitan and the suffragan, which was about a century later, that this use originated, of calling all the churches of a province the church (not the churches) of such a province. To this they were gradually led by analogy. The metropolitan presided among the provincial bishops, as the bishop among the presbyters. The application of the term was, after the rise of patriarchal jurisdiction, extended still farther. All that was under the jurisdiction of the archbishop, or patriarch, was his church.

But it is not the style only which has raised suspicion, it is chiefly the sentiments. "Attend to the bishop," says Ignatius to Polycarp, "that God may attend to you. I pledge my "soul for theirs who are subject to the bishop, presbyters, and "deacons. Let my part in God be with them." Αντιψυχον εγω των υποτασσομενων τω επισκοπω κ. τ. λ. which Cotelerius renders, *Devovear ego pro iis qui subditi sunt episcopo*, &c. Admit that, from his adopting the plural of the imperative προσεχετε, in the beginning of the paragraph, he is to be considered as addressing the congregation of Smyrna, and not the bishop, to whom

the letter is directed: Is there nothing exceptionable in what he says? Was it the doctrine of Ignatius, that all that is necessary to salvation in a Christian, is an implicit subjection to the bishops, presbyters, and deacons. Be it that he means only in spiritual matters; is this the style of the apostles to their Christian brethren? Was it thus that Ignatius exhibited to his followers the pattern which had been given by that great apostle, who could say of himself and his fellow-apostles, appealing for his voucher to the people's experience of their ministry,—*We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.* In exact conformity to this, Paul expressly disclaims all dominion over the faith of his hearers, who, he was sensible, were not to be dictated to, but to be reasoned with; not to be commanded, but to be convinced. *Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.* And a little after, *Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.* It is no part of our office to constrain, it is merely to teach; it is not to extort an outward, and perhaps reluctant, compliance, but it is by the efficacy of persuasion to subdue the refractory will, and completely engage the heart; for no obedience in this cause is available, which is not voluntary, and does not proceed from love. It suits not even the apostolic diction to prescribe, to order, but to entreat, to pray. *As though God*, says the apostle, *did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God.* The most authoritative language that he employs, runs in this strain; *I beseech you by the mercies of God;* and, *I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.* Nor is this manner peculiarly Paul's. Peter, the prince of the apostles, as Romanists style him, recurs neither to bulls nor to rescripts, but with equal mildness as his colleague Paul, employs exhortation and entreaty. *The presbyters amongst you*, says he, *I, their fellow-presbyter, exhort. Feed the flock of God among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly.* It is added, *neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock;* and, consequently, engaging their imitation by the attraction of an amiable example, and not enforcing submission by stern authority and command. Had Ignatius been such as the letters ascribed to him represent him, could

he have had the assurance to address his Antiochians in the words of Paul above quoted, "We preach not ourselves, but "Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' "sake?" For is it not his predominant scope, in those letters, to preach himself and other ecclesiastics, inculcating upon the people the most submissive, unlimited, and blind obedience to all of the clerical order? This is an everlasting topic, to which he never slips an opportunity of recurring in season, and out of season. The only consistent declaration which would have suited the author of these epistles, must have been the reverse of Paul's. We preach not Christ Jesus the Lord, but so far only as may conduce to the increase of our influence, and the exaltation of our power; nay, for an object so important, we are not ashamed to preach up ourselves your masters, with unbounded dominion over your faith, and consequently, over both soul and body. For surely, if, in the application of words, any regard is due to propriety as well as consistency, those only must be called masters who are entitled to command, and those must be servants who are obliged to obey. There are, besides, several things in these letters, which, though expressed with simplicity of diction, I find in meaning unintelligible. Such is that in his letter to the Ephesians, chap. vi. "The more silent "a man finds the bishop, he ought to reverence him the more." Consequently if, like the Nazianzene monk, celebrated by Gregory, he should, in praise of God, devote his tongue to an inviolable taciturnity, he would be completely venerable. This, one would be tempted to think, has originated from some opulent ecclesiastic, who was by far too great a man for preaching; at least we may say, it seems an oblique apology for those who have no objection to any thing implied in a bishopric, except the function. None whose notion of the duties of a bishop corresponded with Isaiah's idea of a watchman, (lvi. 10.) would have thought dumbness a recommendation. Yet Ezekiel did not think his prophetical office disparaged by God's telling him, that he had made him a watchman to the house of Israel, (iii. 17.) I shall only add, that if I be not perfectly unprejudiced on this subject, the prejudice by which I am biassed is not against Ignatius, but in his favour. It is because I think very highly of the martyr, and have a strong impression of his virtue,

and of the service which his sufferings and testimony did to the cause of his Master, that I am unwilling rashly to attribute to him what could not fail to lessen him in my estimation. I would save him, if possible, from a second martyrdom in his works, through the attempts, not of open enemies, but of deceitful friends.

But should we admit, after all, in opposition to strong presumptive evidence, the entire genuineness of the letters in question, all that could be fairly inferred from the concession is, that the distinction of orders, and subordination of the presbyters, obtained about twenty or thirty years earlier than I have supposed, and that it was a received distinction at Antioch, and in Asia Minor, before it was known in Macedonia, and other parts of the Christian church. That its prevalence has been gradual, and that its introduction has arisen from the example and influence of some of the principal cities, is highly probable.

I shall only mention one other ancient author by whom the three orders seem to be discriminated, and whose testimony is commonly produced in support of their apostolical institution. The author is Pius, bishop of Rome, reckoned by the Romanists the ninth in succession from Peter and Paul, and consequently, the sixth or seventh from Clement, for they are not entirely agreed about the order. All that remains of him are two short letters to Justus, bishop of Vienna. He is supposed to have written these a little before the middle of the second century, but after Ignatius and Polycarp. This comes so close to the time when I admit the distinction to have generally obtained, that even the clearest testimony from him, though there were no doubt as to the authenticity of the letters, could not be said to weaken my hypothesis. There is something in his words which appears even to favour that hypothesis. At the same time that they mark a distinction, they show it to be but in its infancy, and not comparable to what it arose to in a few centuries. Passing the obscure and indefinite expression, *colobio episcoporum vestitus*, the only passage which is apposite to the question, is in his second letter: "Presbyteri et diaconi "non ut majorem, sed ut ministrum Christi te observent." "Let the presbyters and deacons reverence thee (the bishop)

"not as their superior, but as Christ's minister." I do not say that these words imply that there was no superiority in the bishop. If there had been none, I do not think it would have been natural to add the clause, *non ut majorem*. But they imply that the writer thought this difference too inconsiderable to be a ground of esteem from colleagues in the ministry; and that he accounted the true foundation of their respect to be superior diligence in the service. I believe it will be admitted by the impartial and intelligent, that such an expression from a bishop (not to say the bishop of Rome) in the fourth or fifth century, would have been reckoned rather derogatory from the authority of the office, which would have been thought justly entitled to respect and obedience, independently of the personal merit of the officer.

But that the two functions of the bishop and presbyter were, through the whole of that age, occasionally comprehended under the same name, and considered as one office, and not two, I shall show further, by an example from Clement of Alexandria, who wrote at the close of the second century. Having observed (Strom. L. 1.) that in most things there are two sorts of ministry; the one of a nobler nature than the other, which is subservient; and having illustrated this distinction, as by other examples, so by that of philosophy and physic, the former of which he considers as superior, because it administers medicine to the soul; the latter as inferior, because it administers only to the body, he adds, Ομοιως δε και κατα την εκκλησιαν, την μεν βελτιωτικην ʽοι πρεσβυτεροι σωζουσιν εικονα την ʽυπηρετικην ʽοι διακονοι, ταυτας αμφωτας διακονιας αγγελοι τε υπηρετουνται τω Θεω, κατα την των περιγειων οικονομιαν.—"Just so in the "church, the presbyters are entrusted with the dignified ministry, the deacons with the subordinate. Both kinds of service the angels perform to God in the administration of this "lower world." Here the distinction is strongly marked between presbyter and deacon; but is it not plain, from his words, that Clement considered the distinction between bishop and presbyter as, even in his days, comparatively not worthy of his notice?

But passing all critical disquisitions in regard to the precise time and manner of the introduction, as necessarily involved in darkness and uncertainty, and admitting that the distinction

obtained generally before the middle of the second century, let us now inquire into the nature of that episcopacy which then came to be established. It has once and again been observed passingly, that every church had its own pastors, and its own presbytery, independently of every other church. And when one of the presbyters came to be considered as *the pastor* by way of eminence, while the rest were regarded only as his assistants, vicars, or curates, who acted under his direction; as then every church or congregation had but one who was called bishop, so every bishop had but one congregation or church. This is a remark which deserves your particular notice, as it regards an essential point in the constitution of the primitive church,—a point which is generally admitted by those who can make any pretensions to the knowledge of Christian antiquities. In the epistles written to particular congregations, or churches, during the third century, and in some before, notice is almost always taken of their own bishop and presbytery, as belonging specially to themselves. The great patrons of the hierarchy, who found so much on the testimony of Ignatius, will not deny, that on this article he is quite explicit. The bishop's charge is, in the primitive writers, invariably denominated ἐκκλησια, a church, or congregation, in the singular number, never ἐκκλησιαι, churches, or congregations, in the plural.

But as this argument may not appear so strong to those who are accustomed to form their opinion of things from the import of their names in modern dialects, it will not be amiss to inquire particularly into the ancient applications of the word. Properly there are, in the New Testament, but two original senses of the ἐκκλησια, which can be called different, though related. One is, when it denotes a number of people actually assembled, or accustomed to assemble, together, and is then properly rendered by the English terms, congregation, convention, assembly, and even sometimes crowd, as in Acts xix. 32, 40. The other sense is to denote a society united together by some common tie, though not convened, perhaps not convenable, in one place. And in this acceptation, as well as in the former, it sometimess occurs in classical writers, as signifying a state, or commonwealth, and nearly corresponding to the Latin *civitas*. When the word is limited, or appropriated, as it generally is in

the New Testament, by its regimen, as τȣ Θεȣ, τȣ κυριȣ, τȣ Χριϛȣ, or by the scope of the place, it is always to be explained in one or other of the two senses following, corresponding to the two general senses above mentioned. It denotes either a single congregation of Christians, in correspondence to the first, or the whole Christian community, in correspondence to the second. We can hardly ever be at a loss to know from the context which of the two is implied. That it is in the former acceptation, is sometimes evident from the words in construction, as της εκκλησιας της εν Κεγχρεαις, and τη εκκλησια τȣ Θεȣ τη εν Κορινθω, and the like. In the latter sense it ought always to be understood, when we find nothing in the expression, or in the scope of the passage, to determine us to limit it; for instance, in the following: Επι ταυτη τη πετρα οικοδομησω μȣ την εκκλησιαν. 'Ο κυριος προσετιθει τȣς σωζομενȣς καθ' 'ημεραν τη εκκλησια. In this last acceptation of the word, for the whole body of Christ's disciples, wheresoever dispersed, it came afterwards to be distinguished by the epithet καθολικη. They said, 'η εκκλησια 'η καθολικη, the catholic or universal church.

But in any intermediate sense, between a single congregation and the whole community of Christians, not one instance can be brought of the application of the word in sacred writ. We speak now, indeed, (and this has been the manner for ages) of the Gallician church, the Greek church, the church of England, the church of Scotland, as of societies independent and complete in themselves. Such a phraseology was never adopted in the days of the apostles. They did not say the church of Asia, or the church of Macedonia, or the church of Achaia; but the churches of God in Asia, the churches in Macedonia, the churches in Achaia. The plural number is invariably used when more congregations than one are spoken of, unless the subject be of the whole commonwealth of Christ. Nor is this the manner of the penmen of sacred writ only. It is the constant usage of the term in the writings of ecclesiastic authors for the two first centuries. The only instance to the contrary that I remember to have observed, is in the epistles of Ignatius, on which I have already remarked.

It adds considerable strength to our argument, that this is exactly conformable to the usage, in regard to this term, which had always obtained among the Jews. The whole nation, or com-

monwealth of Israel, was often denominated πασα ἡ εκκλησια Ισραηλ. And after the revolt of the ten tribes, when they ceased to make one people or state with the other two, we hear of πασα ἡ εκκλησια Ιουδα. This is the large or comprehensive use of the word, as above observed. In regard to the more confined application, the same term εκκλησια, was also employed to denote a number of people, either actually assembled, or wont to assemble, in the same place. Thus all belonging to the same synagogue were called indifferently εκκλησια or συναγωγη, as these words, in the Jewish use, were nearly synonymous. But never did they call the people belonging to several neighbouring synagogues εκκλησια, or συναγωγη, in the singular number, but εκκλησιαι and συναγωγαι, in the plural. Any other use in the apostles, therefore, must have been as unprecedented and unnatural as it would have been improper, and what could not fail to lead their hearers or readers into mistakes. There are some other differences between the modern and the ancient applications of this word, which I shall take another opportunity of observing.

Now as one bishop is invariably considered, in the most ancient usage, as having only one εκκλησια, it is manifest that his inspection at first was only over one parish. Indeed, the words congregation and parish are, if not synonymous, predicable of each other. The former term relates more properly to the people as actually congregated, the other relates to the extent of ground which the dwelling houses of the members of one congregation occupy. Accordingly, the territory to which the bishop's charge extended, was always named, in the period I am speaking of, in Greek παροικια, in Latin *parochia*, or rather *parœcia*, which answers to the English word *parish*, and means properly a neighbourhood.

Let it not be imagined that I lay too great stress on the import of words, whose significations in time come insensibly to alter. It merits to be observed, that in the first application of a name to a particular purpose, there is commonly a strict regard paid to etymology. As this word, together with the adjective παροικος, vicinus, neighbouring, are conjugates of the verb παροικεω, *accolo juxta habito*, it can be applied no otherwise when it relates to place, than the term parish is with us at this day. And this exactly agrees with the exposition of the word

given by Stephanus, that learned and accurate lexicographer. "Ego non parochias primum, sed parœcias appellatas esse censeo: παροικοι enim sunt accolæ, quare qui fanum aliquod accolunt paroeci dicti sunt, ejusdem scilicet fani consortes, et parœcia accolarum conventus et accolatus, sacraque vicinia, nam παροικοι dicuntur etiam οι προσοικοι, id est vicini."

Let it be observed further, that in those early ages the bishop's charge or district was never called διοικησις, a diocese; concerning the import of which, I shall add the following passage from the same authority:—"Latini quoque utuntur hoc vocabulo: diœceses vocantes quasdam quasi minores provincias, quas alqiuis, qui eis præfectus est, administrat, et in quibus jus dicit, unde et pontificum διοικησεις apud recentiores." Thus in a few ages afterwards, when the bishop's charge became so extensive, as more to resemble a province than a parish, nay, when in fact it comprised many churches and parishes within it, the name was changed, and it was then very properly called a diocese. The other term, without deviating in the least from its original and proper import, received a new application to that which was put under the cure of a presbyter only.

But I shall offer a few more thoughts on this subject in my next prelection, and shall consider more particularly the constitution of the church, and the powers of the several orders of its ministers in the second and third centuries.

LECTURE VII.

In some preceding discourses, I have considered the nature and different orders of the ministry in the church constituted by the apostles. Particularly in my last lecture on this subject, I entered on the examination of that which immediately succeeded it, and took place in the second and third centuries. I observed, that, before the middle of the second century, a subordination in the ecclesiastic polity, which I call primitive episcopacy, began to obtain very generally throughout the Christian world; every single church or congregation having a plurality of presbyters, who, as well as the deacons, were all under the superintendency of one pastor or bishop. I observed, that all antiquity are unanimous in assigning to one bishop no more than one εκκλησια or congregation, and one παροικια or parish. For this reason, though it was a proper episcopacy, in respect of the disparity of the ministers, it was a parochial episcopacy, in respect of the extent of the charge, I endeavoured to set this matter in a stronger light from the consideration of the import of these words εκκλησια and παροικια, according to the ancient usage.

But that I may not be thought to depend too much on the signification of names and words, I shall evince, beyond all possible doubt, that the bishop's cure was originally confined to a single church or congregation. This I intend to show from the particulars recorded in ancient authors, in relation both to him and to it. For brevity's sake, I shall not produce the passages at length from the fathers of the second or third centuries referred to, but shall barely mention the principal topics which serve to vouch the fact, and which can be verified from the clearest and most explicit declarations of those primitive writers, particularly of Ignatius, (for though the work ascribed to him is with reason suspected to have been interpolated, with a view

to aggrandize the episcopal order, it was never suspected of any interpolation with a view to lessen it) of Justin Martyr, of Ireneus, of Tertullian, of Cyprian, and several others. Indeed, the facts I found upon are incontrovertible.

Now, from the writings of those fathers, it is evident, that the whole flock assembled in the same place, επι το αυτο, with their bishop and presbyters, as on other occasions, so in particular every Lord's day, or every Sunday, as it was commonly called, for the purposes of public worship, hearing the scriptures read, and receiving spiritual exhortations. The perseverance in this practice is warmly recommended by the ancients, and urged on all the Christian brethren, from the consideration of the propriety there is, that those of the same church and parish, and under the same bishop, should all join in one prayer and one supplication, as people who have one mind and one hope. For it is argued, "If the prayer of one or two "have great efficacy, how much more efficacious must that be, "which is made by the bishop and the whole church. He, "therefore, who doth not assemble with him is denominated "proud and self-condemned." Again, as there was but one place of meeting, so there was but one communion table or altar, as they sometimes metaphorically called it. "There is "but one altar," said Ignatius, as there is but one bishop." Ἑν θυσιαστηριον ὡς εις επισκοπος.

Nothing can be more contemptible than the quibbles which some keen controvertists have employed, to elude the force of this expression. They will have it to import one sort of unity in the first clause, and quite a different sort in the second, though the second is introduced merely in explanation of the first. In the first, say they, it denotes not a numerical, but a mystical, unity, not one thing, but one kind of thing; in the second, one identical thing. One would think it impossible for a writer more accurately, by any words, to fix his meaning. The illustration of *one bishop* puts it beyond question what sort of unity he ascribes to the altar, one altar as one bishop; insomuch that if, in a consistency with his assertion, there can be, in one diocese, but one individual bishop, there can be, in one diocese, but one individual altar; and contrariwise, if, in a consistency with his assertion, there may be, in one diocese, many individual

altars of the same kind, there may be also many individual bishops of the same kind. Indeed, by their mode of interpreting, the simile adduced, so far from tending, agreeably to the author's design, to explain and illustrate, serves only to confound and mislead. What he ought to have said, is the reverse of what he did say. He ought, on that hypothesis, to have said, There is one altar, but not as there is one bishop, for in regard to the last, the bishop, we affirm, that there is literally and properly but one in a diocese; in regard to the first, the altar, we affirm the unity only figuratively and improperly, since, in the literal sense, there may be many. The like chicane has been employed for eluding the argument founded on the expressions *one prayer* and *one supplication*.

But to return; when the eucharist (which we more commonly denominate the Lord's supper) was celebrated, the whole people of the parish, or bishopric, if ye please to call it so, communicated in the same congregation, and all received the sacrament, if not from the hands of the bishop, at least under his eye. Hence it was that the setting up another altar within the limits of his parish, beside the one altar of the bishop, was considered as the great criterion of schism. And as the whole of the bishop's parish generally received the symbols of Christ's body and blood, mediately or immediately, from his hand, so they were, for the most part, baptized, either by him, or in his presence. He had also the particular superintendence of all the Christian poor, the widows, the orphans, the strangers, the prisoners, within the bounds of his charge, and the chief direction in the disposal of the public charities. The testimonials, or *literæ formatæ*, as they were called, which private Christians were obliged to have, when removing from one district to another, that they might be received as brethren in other Christian congregations, were all signed by the bishop, in like manner as with us they are signed by the minister of the parish. Now all the particulars above-mentioned were considered as belonging to his office. No doubt when, through sickness or necessary absence, he could not discharge any part himself, his place was supplied by one or more of his presbyters or vicars. Nay, it was even thought befitting, that the bishop should know, by name, every individual of his flock, and that there

should not be a marriage among them without his approbation.

When all these things, which are supported by unexceptionable testimonies, are duly weighed, is it possible to conceive otherwise of the bishop, during the period I am here speaking of, than as of the pastor of a single parish? He answers precisely to what, in latter times, has been called *the parson*; a title of respect when it first came into use, though I know not how, through the caprice of custom, it at present conveys an idea of disrespectful familiarity. The presbyters were his counsellors and assistants, or, as people would now denominate them, his curates. I do not pretend that this resemblance holds in every particular, though it plainly does in most. Perhaps, in some things, the case may bear a greater analogy to some Highland parishes in this northern part of the island, wherein, by reason of their territorial extent, the pastor is under the necessity of having ordained itinerant assistants, whom he can send, as occasion requires, to supply his place in the remote parts of his charge.

This, by the way, suggests the principal difference between those ancient and the greater part of modern parishes. In general (not indeed universally) they were larger in respect of territory, though even, in this respect, far short of a modern diocese. But it is not so much by the measure of the ground as by the number of the people, that the extent of a pastoral charge is to be reckoned. Now that, in this last respect, they did not, at first, exceed modern parishes, is manifest from the several particulars which have been observed above. Nay, if every circumstance be considered, there is no reason to believe that they were less. There were yet no magnificent edifices, built for the reception of Christian assemblies, such as were afterwards reared at a great expence, and called churches. Their best accommodation, for more then a century, was the private houses of the wealthiest disciples, which were but ill adapted to receive very numerous conventions. However, as it was but a small part of the people of a city or village, with its environs, which composed the church, the extent of territory that would be necessary to supply the pastor with one sufficient congregation, must be so much the greater in proportion as the number

of unconverted Jews and heathens would exceed the number of converts. Suppose at the time the churches were first planted by the apostles, the Christians at a medium were one-thirtieth part of the people. This, I believe, is rather counting high, for in very populous cities, like Rome and Alexandria, we have no reason to think that they amounted to one-hundredth part. However, as in a supposition of this kind, intended merely for illustration, there is no occasion for historical exactness; let the number of Christians be reckoned one-thirtieth of the inhabitants over all Asia Minor. Suppose farther, that country to have been equal then, in point of populousness, to what Great Britain is at present,—one of their bishoprics, in order to afford a congregation equal to that of a middling parish, ought to have been equal in extent to thirty parishes in this island. Yet take them at an average, and they will be found to have been scarcely equal to one-third of that number. By the account which Bingham gives us, in his Christian Antiquities, (b. ix. ch. ii. sect. 8.) an author by no means inclined to diminish the episcopal dignity, the whole forty-eight bishoprics, in the fourth century, comprehended in the patriarchate of Jerusalem, were no more than equal to two middling German dioceses. And as that patriarchate included three provinces under their respective metropolitans, the district of a primate, or metropolitan, in Palestine, under whom there were many bishops, wanted one-third to be of equal extent with the precincts of an ordinary bishopric in Germany. We may, however, form some notion of the origin of those extensive parishes, (for, considered as parishes, they must be called extensive,) from what happens in the manner of proceeding adopted by any new religious sect, which springs up amongst ourselves. Where their proselytes are not numerous, the parishes or districts assigned to their ministers must be so much the more extended. In fact, they are not less sometimes, if we reckon by the distance of one conventicle from another, than twenty, thirty, or even fifty, miles in length.

Bingham has observed, on the province of Pontus Polemoniacus, that it comprehended only five dioceses, and that of those, Neocesaria, the metropolis, was no less, than a hundred miles from Polemonium, and sixty from Comana, the two

nearest bishoprics, or rather the two nearest episcopal residences. But he has not thought proper to observe also, what Tillemont hath shewn from Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, both natives of Cappadocia, that, in the middle of the third century, there were no more than seventeen believers in that extensive diocese: and these probably all resided in the city. Could fewer be properly associated into one congregation?

It deserves likewise to be remarked, that the largeness, even in point of territory, of those primitive parishes or dioceses, if you please to call them so, was more in appearance than in reality. In a particular province, I shall suppose there were, immediately after the first publication of the gospel, twelve parishes erected. This does by no means imply, that the whole province was divided into twelve parishes, though this is the way in which we too commonly understand it. There might be, and often were, many towns, and villages, and tracts of land, in the province, wherein there were no Christians at all, and which therefore were not at first considered as belonging to any of those parishes. A parish generally was in fact no more than one city or village, with its suburbs and environs. Afterwards, indeed, when in such places as had not been originally included, there came to be some Christian converts, these would naturally join themselves to the congregation assembling in the nearest town or village; which, agreeably to the fraternal love that then prevailed among the disciples of Christ, would cordially receive them. This was one principal cause of the gradual enlargement of parishes, as it proved afterwards the cause, (when Christianity became the religion of the empire, and when, by the sudden accession of multitudes of converts from all quarters, a subdivision of what appeared to be comprehended under the original districts was necessary, it then, I say, proved the cause) that the ancient parishes, still retaining their first names, assumed the form as well as the extent of dioceses. But of this more afterwards.

It adds not a little to the credibility of the account now given, that it represents the Christian churches as originally analogous, in point of polity, to the Jewish establishment of synagogues. Nothing can be more evident, than that, in respect of the exterior part, it was the intention of the founders of the church to adopt,

as far as possible, that model which, under the conduct of Providence, had been settled in Judea, as some learned men think, by the prophet Ezra. Certain it is, that the very names of church-officers were borrowed from the synagogue, which had also its elders, overseers, deacons, or almoners; and amongst whom one usually presided, who was called the angel of the congregation, the title given by our Lord in the Apocalypse to the presidents of Christian assemblies. Now it is well known, that among the Jews, every synagogue had its own ministry, and was complete in itself, having no dependency except on the sanhedrim, or supreme council of the nation. Such a thing as several synagogues, under the inspection of the same minister or ministers, was never heard of.

But to return to the administration of religious ordinances in those primitive parishes, let it be observed, that though the presbyters were all assistants to the bishop, in the discharge of all parochial duties, the parish was not then divided or parcelled out among them like a modern diocese. They all, with their bishop and the people, as was observed above, assembled in one place, for the public offices of religion. "For where should the "flock be," says Ignatius, "but with their shepherd?" And this title was given to him by way of eminence. The principal part of the work of the presbyters, beside what belonged to their judicial capacity in the presbytery, was, by the bishop's direction, to execute the less public parts of the pastoral function, as visiting the sick, instructing and preparing the catechumens, exhorting the penitents, and other such ministerial offices, in those parts of the parish, (for all the presbyters belonged in common to the whole) to which he found it reasonable to send them. They also assisted him in the public offices of religion; and when he was sick, or otherwise necessarily absent, they supplied his place. As the charge of the parish was eminently devolved upon him, they acted in all the ministerial duties by his direction, or at least with his permission. The only question of moment that has been raised on this head is whether, by his order or allowance, they could exercise every part of the pastoral office as well as the bishop, or whether there were some things, such as ordaining others to the ministry, which even his commands could not empower them to do. As the power of the

bishops arose, and that of the presbyters sunk, gradually, I am disposed to think, that in the course of two centuries, or even a century and a half, there was a considerable difference, in this respect, in the state of things, at the beginning and at the end. Towards the conclusion of that period, I imagine, it became very unusual for a bishop to delegate this, which was ever looked upon as the most sacred and most momentous trust, to his presbyters. The transition is very natural from *seldom* to *never*; and in our ways of judging, the transition is as natural from what never is done, to what cannot lawfully be done.

We know that some time after the period to which I have here confined myself, ordination by presbyters was prohibited, and declared null by ecclesiastical canons. But the very prohibitions themselves, the very assertions of those whom they condemned as heretics, prove the practice, then probably wearing, but not quite worn out. There was no occasion for making canons against ordination by deacons, or by laymen, who did not pretend to such a right. In deference, however, to the apostle Paul's authority, the bishop still admitted, and even required, all the presbyters present to join with him in ordaining a presbyter, by the imposition of their hands with his, but not in ordaining a bishop. They did not reflect, that in the only instance mentioned by Paul, the presbytery had assisted in ordaining an evangelist, an extraordinary minister, even superior to a bishop. The arbitrary supposition of Chrysostom, who was himself a bishop and a patriarch, about four hundred years afterwards, when things were on a very different footing, and when the episcopate, on account of the wealth and secular power that accompanied it, was become a great object of ambition, (Chrysostom's supposition) that by the presbytery the apostle meant a synod of bishops, a notion totally unsupported by evidence, and repugnant to the uniform usage of the term in Christian antiquity, has hardly merit enough to entitle it to be mentioned.

But that, about the middle of the third century, the presbyters were still considered as vested with the power of conferring orders, has been plausibly argued from an expression of Firmilian, in his letter to Cyprian: "Quando omnis potestas et gra-"tia in ecclesia constituta sit, ubi præsident majores natu, qui "et baptizandi, et manum imponendi, et ordinandi, possident po-

"testatem." Cypr. Epist. 75. in some editions the 43d. That by *majores natu*, in Latin, is meant the same with πρεσβυτεροι, in Greek, of which it is indeed a literal version, can scarcely be thought questionable. Besides, the phrase so exactly coincides with that of Tertullian, who says, "Probati præsident seniores," approved elders preside, as to make the application, if possible, still clearer. Indeed, if we were not to consider the Latin, *majores natu*, as meant to correspond to the Greek πρεσβυτεροι, the only translation we could give to the phrase, used by Firmilian, would be, "where old men preside;" an affirmation which could hardly ever have been in such general terms given with truth. For when the canonical age of bishops came to be established, it was no more than thirty: and it is a certain fact, that both before and after that canon, several were ordained younger. I am far from thinking, that under this term, *majores natu*, those who were then peculiarly called bishops are not included, or even principally intended; but what I maintain is, that, now that the distinction had obtained, the use of so comprehensive a term seems sufficiently to shew, that it was not his intention to affirm it of the latter order, exclusively of the former, else he would never have employed a word which, when used strictly, was appropriated to the former order, and not to the latter. Thus the name *priests*, in English, in the plural number, is often adopted to denote the clergy in general, both bishops and priests. But no intelligent person, that understands the language, and does not intend to deceive, would express himself in this manner: "In the church of England, the priests "have the power of baptizing, confirming, and ordaining." Nor could he excuse himself by pretending, that in regard to the two last articles he meant by the word priests, the bishops, exclusively of those more commonly, and for distinction's sake, called priests. Yet the two cases are exactly parallel; for, in Firmilian's time, the distinction of the three orders was, though not so considerable, as well known by the Christians in Cappadocia, and in Africa, as they are at this day in England. This also serves to shew how little truth there is in that observation of Dodwell's quoted in a former discourse, that from Ignatius's time, the distinction of the names was most accurately observed by all Christian writers.

As another eminent authority, I shall produce Cyprian. I recur to him the more willingly, because he is held the great apostle of high-church. Cyprian's own words, in Epist. 5. directed to his presbyters and deacons at Carthage, when he himself, for some time, found it necessary to retire, are these: "Quoniam mihi interesse nunc non permittit loci conditio, peto "vos pro fide et religione vestra, fungamini illic et vestris par-"tibus et meis, ut nihil vel ad disciplinam vel ad diligentiam "desit." Is it to be supposed, that he would have so expressly enjoined them, without exception or limitation, to discharge the duties of his function, as well as their own, if neither presbyters nor deacons could do any thing in ordination, that part which was the chief of all? Nay, might it not be justly thought, that if he meant to except this, he would have given them some hint in that letter, what method, in case of any vacancy in their presbytery, (which, during his absence, would be doubly incommodious) they should take, to get it quickly and properly supplied? But his general rule for the removal of all doubts, and which renders the descending to particulars unnecessary, is, that they are to discharge his office, and their own.

To come to the writers of the age that succeeded, the first I shall mention is Hilary, a Roman deacon, whom I had occasion to mention once before, who wrote a commentary upon Paul's epistles, about the middle of the fourth century. His works are always bound up with those of Ambrose, bishop of Milan; and, by some blunder in the editors, continue to pass under his name. He is sometimes quoted by moderns under the name of Pseudambrose and Ambrosiaster. Of his commentary, Sixtus de Sienna has given this character: "In omnes Pauli epis-"tolas libri quatuordecim, breves quidem in verbis, sed senten-"tiarum pondere graves;" which is entirely approved by Richard Simon of the Oratory, (Hist. Crit. du Nouveau Test. p. 3. chap. ix.) who adds, "There are few ancient commentaries "on the epistles of St. Paul, and even on the whole New Tes-"tament, which can be compared with this." This commentator, in his exposition of the third chapter of the first epistle to Timothy, has these words: "Post episcopum tamen diaconi "ordinationem subjecit. Quare? nisi quia episcopi et presby-"teri una ordinatio est? Uterque enim sacerdos est. Sed

"episcopus primus est; ut omnis episcopus presbyter sit, non "omnis presbyter episcopus. Hic enim episcopus est, qui inter presbyteros primus est. Denique Timotheum presbyterum ordinatum significat, sed quia ante se alterum non "habebat, episcopus erat." Nothing can be more evident, than that the whole distinction of the episcopate is here ascribed to seniority in the ministry, without either election or special ordination. When the bishop died, the senior colleague succeeded of course. As to ordination, it was the same in both; and bishop meant no more than first among the presbyters, or the senior presbyter. This is very probably the footing on which the precedency in the presbytery originally stood, though it did not long remain so. It was out of the earliest converts that the first pastors were chosen; and the conclusion is analogical, that the oldest pastor would be entitled to preside.

Another witness whom I shall adduce, is Jerome, who wrote about the end of the fourth century, and the beginning of the fifth. The testimony which I shall bring from him, regards the practice that had long subsisted at Alexandria. I shall give you the passage in his own words, from his epistle to Evagrius. "Alexandriæ a Marco evangelista usque ad Heraclam "et Dionysium episcopos, presbyteri semper unum ex se electum, in excelsiori gradu collocatum, episcopum nominabunt: "quomodo si exercitus imperatorem faciat: aut diaconi eligant "de se quem industrium noverint, et archidiaconum vocent." I know it has been said, that this relates only to the election of the bishop of Alexandria, and not to his ordination. To me it is manifest that it relates to both; or, to express myself with greater precision, it was the intention of that father to signify, that no other ordination than this election, and those ceremonies with which the presbyters might please to accompany it, such as the instalment and salutation, was then and there thought necessary to one who had been ordained a presbyter before; that, according to the usage of that church, this form was all that was requisite to constitute one of the presbyters their bishop. But as I am sensible that unsupported assertions are entitled to no regard on either side, I shall assign my reasons from the author's own words, and then leave every one to judge for himself.

Jerome, in the preceding part of this letter, had been maintaining, in opposition to some deacon, who had foolishly boasted of the order of deacons as being superior to the order of presbyters, Jerome, I say, had been maintaining, that in the original and apostolical constitution of the church, bishop and presbyter were but two names for the same office. That ye may be satisfied that what he says implies no less, I shall give it you in his own words:—"Audio quendam in tantam erupisse vecordiam, ut diaconas presbyteris, id est episcopis, anteferret. "Nam cum apostolus perspicue doceat eosdem esse presbyteros "quos episcopos, quid patitur mensarum et viduarum minister, "ut supra eos, se tumidus efferat."—For this purpose he had, in a cursory manner, pointed out some of those arguments from the New Testament, which I took occasion, in a former discourse, to illustrate. In regard to the introduction of the episcopal order, as then commonly understood, in contradistinction to that of presbyter, he signifies, that it did not exist from the beginning, but was merely an expedient devised after the times of the apostles, in order the more effectually to preserve unity in every church, as in case of differences among the pastors, it would be of importance to have one acknowledged superior, in whose determination they were bound to acquiesce. His words are:—"Quod autem *postea:*" he had been speaking immediately before of the times of the apostles, "unus electus est, "qui cæteris preponeretur, in schismatis remedium factum est, "ne unus quisque ad se trahens, Christi ecclesiam rumperet." Then follows the passage quoted above concerning the church of Alexandria. Nothing can be plainer than that he is giving an account of the first introduction of the episcopate, (as the word was then understood) which he had been maintaining was not a different order from that of presbyter, but merely a certain pre-eminence conferred by election, for the expedient purpose of preventing schism. And in confirmation of what he had advanced, that this election was all that at first was requisite, he tells the story of the manner that had long been practised and held sufficient for constituting a bishop in the metropolis of Egypt. It is accordingly introduced thus: "Nam et "Alexandriæ," as a case entirely apposite, to wit, an instance of a church in which a simple election had continued to be ac-

counted sufficient for a longer time than in other churches, an instance which had remained a vestige and evidence of the once universal practice.

Now if he meant only to tell us, as some would have it, that there the election of the bishop was in the presbyters, there was no occasion to recur to Alexandria for an example, or to a former period, as that continued still to be a very common, if not the general, practice throughout the church. And though it be allowed to have been still the custom in most places, to get also the concurrence or consent of the people, this shews more strongly how frivolous the argument from their being electors would have been in favour of presbyters, as equal in point of order to bishops; and consequently superior to deacons; since, in regard to most places, as much as this could be said concerning those who are inferior to deacons, the very meanest of the people, who had all a suffrage in the election of their bishop. But, understood in the way I have explained it, the argument has both sense and strength in it, and is in effect as follows:—There can be no essential difference between the order of bishop, and that of presbyter, since, to make a bishop, nothing more was necessary at first (and of this practice the church of Alexandria long remained an example) than the nomination of his fellow-presbyters; and no ceremony of consecration was required, but what was performed by them, and consisted chiefly in placing him in a higher seat, and saluting him bishop [a].

Add to this, that the very examples this father makes use of for illustration, shew manifestly, that his meaning must have been as I have represented it. His first instance is the election of an emperor by the army, which he calls expressly making an emperor. And is it not a matter of public notoriety, that the emperors, raised in this manner, did, from that moment, without waiting any other inauguration, assume the imperial

[a] Was ever any thing more frivolous than Pearson's criticism on the distinction between *a se* and *ex se*, the phrase used in the above quotation *? Or could any thing be conceived more foreign to Jerome's purpose, than the whole passage, as the bishop has thought fit to interpret it?

* *Vindiciæ Ignatianæ*, p. I. c. x.

titles, and exercise the imperial power? And did they not treat all as rebels who opposed them? If possible, the other example is still more decisive. To constitute an archdeacon in the sense which the word was then used, no other form of investiture was necessary, but his election, which was in Jerome's time solely in his fellow-deacons; though this also, with many other things, came afterwards into the hands of the bishop. By this example he also very plainly acquaints us, that the bishop originally stood in the same relation to the presbyters, in which the archdeacon, in his own time, did to the other deacons, and was, by consequence, no other than what the archpresbyter came to be afterwards, the first among the presbyters.

But does not Jerome, after all, admit, in the very next sentence, the superiority of bishops in the exclusive privilege of ordaining? True: he admits it as a distinction that then actually obtained; but the whole preceding part of his letter was written to evince, that from the beginning it was not so. From ancient times he descends to times then modern, and from distant countries he comes to his own; concluding, that still there was but one article of moment whereby their powers were discriminated. "Quid enim facit, excepta ordinatione, episcopus, quod presbyter non faciat?" This indeed proves sufficiently, that at that time presbyters were not allowed to ordain. But it can prove nothing more; for in regard to his sentiments about the rise of this difference, it was impossible to be more explicit than he had been through the whole epistle. I shall only add, that, for my part, I cannot conceive another interpretation, that can give either weight to his argument, or consistency to his words. The interpretation I have given, does both, and that without any violence to the expression.

I might plead Jerome's opinion in this case—I do plead only his testimony. I say I might plead his opinion, as the opinion of one who lived in an age when the investigation of the origin of any ecclesiastical order, or custom, must have been incomparably easier than it can be to us at this distance of time. I might plead his opinion, as the opinion of a man who had more erudition than any person then in the church, the greatest linguist, the greatest critic, the greatest antiquary of them all. But I am no friend to an implicit deference to human authority

in matters of opinion. Let his sentiments be no further regarded than the reasons by which they are supported are found to be good. I do plead only his testimony, as a testimony in relation to a matter of fact, both recent and notorious; since it regarded the then late uniform practice of the church of Alexandria, a city which, before Constantinople became the seat of empire, was, next to Rome, the most eminent in the Christian world. To the same purpose the testimony of the Alexandrian patriarch Eutychius has been pleaded, who, in his annals of that church, takes notice of the same practice, but with greater particularity of circumstances than had been done by Jerome. Eutychius tells us, that the number of presbyters therein was always twelve: and that, on occasion of a vacancy in the episcopal chair, they chose one of themselves, whom the remaining eleven ordained bishop by imposition of hands and benediction. In these points, it is evident there is nothing that can be said to contradict the testimony of Jerome. All that can be affirmed is, that the one mentions particulars about which the other had been silent. But it will be said, there is one circumstance, the duration assigned to this custom, wherein there seems to be a real contradiction. Jerome brings it no farther down than Heracla and Dionysius; whereas Eutychius represents it as continuing to the time of Alexander, about fifty years later. Now it is not impossible that a circumstantial custom might have been in part abolished at one time, and in part at another. But admit that, in this point, the two testimonies are contradictory, that will by no means invalidate their credibility as to those points on which they are agreed. The difference, on the contrary, as it is an evidence that the last did not copy from the first, and that they are therefore two witnesses, and not one, serves rather as a confirmation of the truth of those articles wherein they concur. And this is our ordinary method of judging in all matters depending on human testimony. That Jerome, who probably spoke from memory, though certain as to the main point, might be somewhat doubtful as to the precise time of the abolition of the custom, is rendered even probable by his mentioning, with a view to mark the expiration of the practice, two successive bishops rather than one. For if he had known certainly that it ended with Heracla, there would have been no

occasion to mention Dionysius; and if he had been assured of its continuance to the time of Dionysius, there would have been no propriety in mentioning Heracla.

Some have inferred from a passage in Tertullian, that however general the practice was in the second and subsequent centuries, of settling in every church all the three orders above explained, it was not universal that, in parishes where there were but a few Christians remotely situated from other churches, it was judged sufficient to give them a pastor or bishop only, and some deacons. The presbyters then being but a sort of assistants to the bishop, might not, in very small charges, be judged necessary. The thing is not in itself improbable, and the authority above-mentioned, before I had examined it, or seen a more accurate edition, led me to conclude it real. But on examination I find, that what had drawn me and others into this opinion, was no more than a false reading of a sentence quoted in a former lecture. In some editions of Tertullian we read, (De exhort. cast.) "Ubi ecclesiastici ordinis non est consessus, et offert, "et tinguit, sacerdos qui est ibi solus." I need not urge that this expression is quite different in all the best manuscripts, and most correct editions: this being one of those glaring corruptions which, after a careful perusal, betray themselves to an attentive reader of any penetration. The words, as I have now transcribed them, considered in connexion with the subject treated in the context, have neither sense nor coherence in them; whereas nothing can be more apposite to the author's argument than they are in the way formerly quoted. "Ubi ecclesiastici "ordinis non est consessus et offers, et tinguis, et sacerdos es "tibi solus." So sensible of this were the two learned critics, Petavius and Dodwell, that though both were violently disposed in their different ways to pervert the meaning, neither thought proper to avail himself of a variation in the reading, which would have removed at once what to them was a great stumbling-block. It is indeed a reading which savours more of art than of negligence, and has much the appearance of those inquisitorial corrections which were made on several ancient books in the sixteenth century, especially those published in the papal dominions, or where the holy office was established, in order to adapt the ancient doctrine to the orthodoxy of the day. Now nothing

could be more opposite to this, than what seemed to admit, that any necessity or exigence whatever could entitle a layman to exercise the functions of a priest.—But this by the way.

The opinion of Dr. Hammond, (Annotations, Acts xi. 30.) that the apostles instituted only the office of bishop and deacon, and that the intermediate office of presbyter was soon afterwards introduced, is not materially different from the doctrine which I endeavoured, in a preceding lecture, to prove from the New Testament. Provided it be allowed, that the ministry, according to the apostolical arrangement, consisted of two orders, and not of three, the one properly the ministry of the word, the other the ministry of tables, it would be no better than logomachy, or altercation about words, to dispute whether the minister of the former kind should be called bishop, or presbyter, since it is evident, that these names were used synonymously by the inspired writers. Were we to be confined to one term, I should readily admit, that the first is the more proper of the two. The name ἐπίσκοπος, bishop, inspector, strictly expresses the charge of a flock; the term πρεσβύτερος, presbyter, elder, senator, is a title of respect, which has been variously applied. And in the ecclesiastic use it has been rendered ambiguous, by having been so long misapplied to a kind of subordinate ministry, which the true presbyterian maintains, with Jerome, was not from the beginning in the church. The only material difference between the doctor's sentiments and mine, on this article, is the following:—That very learned and pious author, misled, as I imagine, more by the dialect of ecclesiastic writers, when the distinction had actually obtained, than by the practice of the primitive church rightly understood, maintains that there was no more than one bishop or pastor allotted to every church, whereas, in my judgment, there were allotted several. Nothing can be more incompatible than his opinion, in this particular, with the style of the sacred penmen, to which, in support of that opinion, he is perpetually doing violence in his commentary. Admitting that the phrases κατ' ἐκκλησίαν and κατὰ πόλιν, may be rendered, as he affirms, *church by church*, and *city by city*, and that consequently what is called, in the common translation, "ordaining elders or bishops in every city, or in every church," may be understood to imply one in each, what shall be said of the many

passages not in the least ambiguous, wherein mention is made of the pastors in the plural number of but one church? Sometimes they are denominated bishops, sometimes presbyters, sometimes those that are over them, their guides or directors in the Lord. Indeed, what we are told, (Acts xx. 17.) that Paul sent from Miletus to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church, might (if there were not another passage to this purpose) serve as a sufficient confutation of that hypothesis. "Ay but," replies our annotator, "by the church is here meant, not the "single church of the city of Ephesus, but the metropolitical "church of Asia." Is it possible, that a man of Dr. Hammond's erudition and discernment, should have been so little acquainted with, or attentive to, the idiom not only of all the inspired, but of all the ecclesiastical, writers of the two first centuries, as, in support of his interpretation, to recur to such an unexampled phraseology? Where will he find all the churches of a province or country called the church of a particular city? But if there were nothing incongruous in the phrase, there is an absurdity in the supposition. How could the apostle expect to find at Ephesus all the bishops of Asia? Or was he, though in so great haste to get to Jerusalem before Pentecost, that he could not conveniently go to Ephesus himself,—was he, I say, to wait till expresses were sent thence by the metropolitan throughout that extensive region, and till, in consequence of this summons, all the Asiatic bishops were convened at Miletus? By this strange way of wresting the plainest words, the saints at Philippi (Phil. i. 1.) are in another place made to mean all the Christians in Macedonia; and, by parity of reason, I acknowledge, the bishops and deacons of Philippi are all those in the holy ministry throughout the Macedonian kingdom. But as amplification does not always answer, the opposite method is sometimes found convenient. When James, (Jam. v. 14.) enjoins the sick person to send for the elders of the church, he means, according to our learned doctor, the elder, bishop, or pastor, of that particular flock. What sentiments might not the words of scripture be made to favour, by this loose and arbitrary mode of interpreting? It is strange that one, whose discernment and impartiality, notwithstanding his prejudices, led him to discover that, in the sacred writings, there was no dis-

tinction between bishop and presbyter, was not able to discover (what was fully as evident) that they contained not a single vestige of metropolitical primacy. The language of the fathers of the fourth and succeeding centuries, (for then all these degrees were firmly rooted) concerning the offices of Timothy and Titus, and the current maxim, "one church, one bishop," which naturally sprang from the distinction of bishop and presbyter, had entirely warped this interpreter's judgments in every case wherein the subject of the ministry was concerned.

I must beg leave to add, that if what this gentleman and I are both agreed in, that there was originally no intervening order between bishop and deacon, be admitted to be just, the account given above of the rise of such an order, has, abstracting from its external evidence, the advantage of his in respect of internal probability. That a middle order (as that of presbyter is in the church of England, and the church of Rome) was, notwithstanding the silence of history, erected at once immediately after the times of the apostles, is, to say the least, much more unlikely, than that it arose gradually out of an inconsiderable distinction, which had obtained from the beginning. Dodwell's hypothesis, that all those ordained by the apostles were no more than presbyters, in his acceptation of the term, labours under the like defect with Hammond's. It is very remarkable, that these two strenuous defenders of episcopacy, do, in effect, both renounce its apostolical origin, admitting no subordination among the ministers of the word in the churches planted by the apostles; and that they do not differ more widely from their allies in this cause, than they do from one another. It is a shrewd presumption, that a system is ill founded, when its most intelligent friends are so much divided about it; and in order to account for it, recur to hypothesis so contradictory;—a presumption too, let me add, that their judgment would lead them soon to adopt the premises of their adversaries, to which they sometimes approach very near, if their passions would allow them to admit the conclusion.

Thus we have advanced from the perfect equality, in respect of ministerial powers, in the stated pastors of the churches planted by the apostles, to that parochial episcopacy which

immediately succeeded it; and which, though it arose gradually from an inconsiderable cause, seems to have assumed the model of a proper episcopate, as the word is now understood, before the middle of the second century. And this I consider as the first step of the hierarchy. I shall continue to trace its progress in the succeeding lectures on this subject.

LECTURE VIII.

I SHOULD not have thought it necessary to be so particular as I have been, in ascertaining the nature of that polity which obtained in the primitive church, both in the simple form wherein it was first settled by the apostles, and in that which it soon after assumed, and almost universally retained, till the expiration of the third century, were not this a matter that is made a principal foundation of dissent by a pretty numerous sect in this country. I do no here allude to those amongst us, who barely prefer the episcopal form of government, whom, in general, as far as I have had occasion to know them, I have found moderate and reasonable in their sentiments on this subject. Such do not pretend that the external model of the church (whatever they may think of the antiquity of theirs) is of the essence of religion. They are sensible, that an ecclesiastical polity, however necessary, is but a subsidiary establishment, totally distinct from the spiritual and vital principle, or the religion, properly so called, for whose preservation and advancement it is calculated; that the merits of any form can be judged of only from its fitness for answering the end; that in this as in all other matters of experience, different times and different places may require some differences.

The notion that it was the intention of the apostles, that the particular mould which they gave the church should be held inviolable, or that it was their doctrine, that the continuance of the same mould is essential to the being of the church, appears to me not indeed problematical, but utterly incredible. One might have justly expected in that case (the matter being of such infinite consequence) a fuller and clearer account not only of what they did in this way, but also of their doctrine in relation to its importance. I shall add a few observations for the further support of the general point in regarding the merits of the question.

As to the origin of one of the offices, that of deacon, it is related in such a manner as bears all the marks of a prudential expedient, suggested by a present inconvenience. The office too, on its first erection, was a trust in things merely temporal; or what Jerome, not unjustly, though perhaps too contemptuously, called, the service of tables and windows. They were no other than what, in modern language, we should call the church's almoners. Nor is it any objection to this representation, that we find both Stephen and Philip, who were among the seven deacons, that were first presented by the people to the apostles, exercising spiritual functions, such as preaching and baptizing. This power they certainly did not derive from the superintendency of the people's charities, to which alone they were chosen, with which they were intrusted, and which the apostles, in the very institution of the office, expressly distinguish from the ministry of the word. "It is not reason," said they, when harassed by the murmurs of the Hellenists against the Hebrews, on account of the supposed neglect of their widows, "that we should leave the word of God, and "serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you "seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wis-"dom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will "give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of "the word." Here the διακονια τραπεζων, and the διακονια λογυ, are manifestly contrasted to each other. Stephen and Philip, on the contrary, derived their spiritual functions either from that title with which, according to Tertullian and the deacon Hilarius, every qualified person, in that state of the church, was invested for promoting the common cause, or from the supernatural gifts they had received for the advancement of the faith, before the election to the deaconry, or (as some have thought most probable) from their being called of God to the office of evangelists. Philip is, in another place, but at a later period, expressly called an evangelist, Acts xxi. 8. It is worthy of notice, that his office of deacon is there also named, that we may not confound them, or ascribe to the one what belonged to the other. We entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven. Though it might be unsuitable, when the number of believers was greatly increased, to an

office of so much weight as the apostleship, to be encumbered with a charge of this nature, it might not be incompatible with any office (like that of evangelist) of less importance. But soon after the apostolic age, (or perhaps sooner) though, by the way, we have no direct information concerning it, the deacons were admitted to assist in the inferior parts of the sacred service. At present, indeed, in almost all the churches where the three orders of bishop, presbyter, and deacon, are found, the last mentioned has no sort of charge in that particular which at first was his whole charge, and which alone gave occasion for the institution of the office; insomuch that we cannot say that the modern deacon is in any respect the same with the apostolic deacon, unless it be in the name. Properly the original charge of the institution, of which we are informed, Acts vi. 1. is abolished, though the name be retained, and applied to an office totally distinct. At present, the oversight of the poor belongs, in England, to the church-wardens, who are annually elected in each parish by the vestry. The deacons have no concern in it. In other churches, other methods are adopted.

There was another office also in the primitive church, from the times of the apostles, which was conferred on elderly women, commonly widows, that of deaconess. Like the former, it did not belong to the ministry of the word, but to that of tables, and seems to have been devised for the discharge of certain charitable services to strangers and to the female poor, which could not be so properly performed by the deacons. That it was of apostolic institution, though we be not informed of the occasion and manner, there is no ground to doubt, since mention is made of it in the New Testament. Phebe is denominated by Paul, Rom. xvi. 1. "a deaconess, ουσαν διακονον, of the "church in Cenchrea." And the directions given in the fifth chapter of the first epistle to Timothy, have always been considered, and with great appearance of reason, as regarding those women who were proper to be admitted to this function. Yet this is an office which has now, for many centuries, been universally disused.

What is truly of divine right in this whole matter of polity is, in my judgment, plainly this,—that those important and divine lessons, which have been transmitted to us by the pas-

tors who preceded us, should by us be committed to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also; and that, as much as possible, every thing should be done for the advancement of the knowledge, the faith, and the obedience of the gospel. This is, doubtless, a duty incumbent on the church and her governors to the end of the world.

But though it be admitted, that a ministry is essential to the church, there are many things regarding the form of the ministry which must be accounted circumstantial. For my own part, I acknowledge it to be my opinion, that there is not a church now in the world which is on the model of that formed by the apostles. The circumstances of men and things are perpetually varying, in respect of laws, civil polity, customs, manners: these, in every society, give rise to new regulations, arrangements, ceremonies:—these, again, insensibly introduce changes in the relations of different classes and ranks of men one to another, exalting some, and depressing others. Sometimes alterations arise from a sort of necessity. A particular measure may be expedient at one time, and in certain circumstances, which is inexpedient at another time, and in different circumstances. But it is equally certain, on the other hand, that changes do not always spring from prudential considerations of fitness. As little can we say that they are always for the better. They more frequently result from the unbridled passions of men, favoured by circumstances and opportunity.

From what hath been said above, therefore, let it not be imagined, that I consider the outward form of polity, because not of the essentials of religion, as a matter absolutely indifferent. That, I imagine, would be an error in the other extreme. To recur to an illustration I formerly employed, though the house in which a man lodges, make no part of his person, either of his body or of his soul, one house may prove a very comfortable and convenient lodging, and another so incommodious as to be scarcely habitable. Under whatever form of ecclesiastic polity a man lives, it will still hold an infallible truth, that if he believe and obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, he shall be saved. But certain it is, that one model of church-government may be much better calculated for promoting that belief and obedience than another. Nay, it is not impossible that

such changes may be introduced, as are much more fitted for obstructing the influence of true religion than for advancing it; nay, for inspiring a contrary temper, and nourishing the most dangerous vices. How far this proved the case with the Christian community, is submitted to every judicious student of ecclesiastic history.

I now proceed to the brief detail of changes which ensued.—In my last discourse on this subject, I brought the history of the ecclesiastic polity as far down as the end of the third century. I observed, that the government which then very generally prevailed, might justly be denominated a parochial episcopacy. The bishop, who was properly the pastor, had the charge of no more than one parish, one church or congregation, the parishioners all assembling in the same place with him for the purposes of public worship, religious instruction, and the solemn commemoration of the death of Christ; that in all these the bishop commonly presided; that each congregation, almost universally, had also a college of presbyters, who were more or less in number, as the exigencies of the parish required; that these constituted the bishop's council in judicial and deliberative matters, and his assistants in the performance of religious functions, both in public and in private. And when the bishop was detained by sickness, or was otherwise necessarily absent, they supplied his place. He was also attended by those called deacons, who, beside the care of the public charities, assisted in some of the inferior offices of religion, as in distributing the sacramental elements in the eucharist, in making the preparations necessary for baptism, and other the like services. Sometimes these also were specially empowered by the bishop to baptize, and even to preach. The pastor, with his colleagues the presbyters, (for so Cyprian frequently denominates them) and the deacons, constituted the presbytery, with the assistance of which, but not entirely without the people, in matters of principal concernment, he conducted the affairs of his church.

Fra Paoli Sarpi, of whom I gave you a character in a former lecture, speaking of the ancient government of the churches, affirms, after Jerome, that in the beginning they constituted so many aristocracies, governed by the council of their respective presbyteries, among the members whereof there subsisted a per-

fect parity; that afterwards, in order the more effectually to obviate the divisions which sprang up, the monarchical form came to be adopted. The superintendency of the whole was given to the president or bishop, to whom all the orders of the church were bound to submit. It is to be observed, that he speaks not of the church universal, but of individual churches or congregations. As to the government of the whole Christian commonwealth, I shall have occasion to consider it afterwards. But even in the original form of government in single parishes, it was not, as Sarpi seems to signify, a pure aristocracy, but rather a mixture of the two forms, the aristocratical and democratical; for in some matters at least, as I observed before, nothing was done without the consent of the people, not declared by representatives, but by themselves, assembled in a collective body. And even when afterwards it came to assume more of the monarchical form, it was not, at least, till after the middle of the third century, as we learn from Cyprian's letters, an unmixed monarchy, but a monarchy limited, and checked by the mixture it still retained of the two other sorts of government, the one in the presbytery, the other in the congregation. Hitherto, however, it held, with but a few exceptions, towards the end of the aforesaid period, that to one bishop there was only one parish, one church, one altar or communion-table, (for both names were used) one baptistery, and though there were several presbyters, the parish was undivided, each of them belonged equally to the whole, and was, in the discharge of his functions, at the direction of the bishop.

The first thing that next deserves our notice, is to inquire from what causes it proceeded, that one bishop came to have the oversight of many congregations, and that the several presbyters came to have their several parishes, every congregation having its own church, altar, and baptistery, as well as pastor or presbyter, to whose care the smaller parish, or subdivision of the larger one, was peculiarly allotted, they all continuing still in subordination to the bishop, who was acknowledged their common head.

We have seen already, that in the first planting of churches, (however wonderful the progress which the apostles made may justly be accounted) as the disciples bore but a small proportion

compared with the unconverted Jews and heathens, the tract of country that would be necessary to yield but a middling congregation, must have been of pretty large extent. The extent for some time would occasionally be enlarged, by the accession of new converts in neighbouring places, where there were none before. This would frequently cause an increase not only to the number of people in the congregation, but also to the territory of the parish. As additions were made gradually to this profession, by the diffusion of Christian knowledge to places it had not reached before, the method which would naturally occur would be, to annex the converts, where there were but few, to the parish that lay nearest. It would be only when considerable acquisitions were made all at once to the Christian cause in remoter places, where formerly there had been few or none, that the notion of new erections would suggest itself. And that in the purest and simplest times, (before vanity or avarice had insinuated themselves) recourse was had to this method of erecting new parishes, the χωρεπισκοποι, country bishops, mentioned by ecclesiastic writers, is an undoubted evidence. But what would make people in most cases recur rather to the other method, is the consideration of the plurality of presbyters they had in every church. As in this they were not confined to a set number, but had more or fewer, as the exigencies of the parish required, they would, when the charge grew greater, think it necessary to add to the number of the presbyters, in order to prevent its becoming burdensome.

Further; it is no reflection on the church in general, or even on the pastors in particular, to suppose, that however sincere their zeal for the cause of Christ might be, as it undoubtedly was with a very great majority, they would not be entirely superior to considerations either of interest or of ambition, when such considerations were not opposed by motives of a higher nature. Now as the pastors were supported by the voluntary contributions of the people, of which the bishop had a fixed proportion, the number and wealth of his people, and the extent of his parish, added both to his importance and to his interest. Indeed, it would be impossible otherwise to account for it, that because in a large city, when only one congregation of Christians could be collected, they had but one bishop, they should

continue to have but one, when there were more Christians in it than would be sufficient to constitute forty, fifty, or a hundred congregations. This, at the same time, strongly shows the influence of names and titles on mankind. The chief pastor had been distinguished, as was observed, from about the middle of the second century, by the title of bishop of such a city or town, suppose Rome, Alexandria, or Antioch, when he had only one congregation, and that perhaps a little one. But this congregation was collected not only from all parts of the city, but from the suburbs, and, probably, some of the nearest villages. This suggested the notion, that however much the number of the disciples might be increased, it would be unsuitable to his title, derogatory from his dignity, as well as hurtful to his interest, to cut off any part of the city, or suburbs, or suburban territory, which had always been considered as under his inspection before, and to which he seemed to have acquired a right by prescription. It would have looked like a sort of degradation to make him exchange the title of bishop of Rome, or Alexandria, into bishop of such a street or lane.

It is indeed certain, that a pastor's charge is properly the people, not the place. It is accordingly styled *cura animarum*, the cure of souls. Nevertheless, there are several reasons which contribute to make the territorial boundaries have more influence on the imagination in the notions of right, than the number of the people has. In the first place, the former are more easily ascertained than the latter. Those are permanent, these are perpetually changing. The people are denominated from the place, not the place from the people. Whatever revolutions come, the inhabitants of Rome will always be Romans; of Carthage, Carthaginians; and of Alexandria, Alexandrians. Add to this, that the restriction of a pastoral charge to a part of the former local precinct, would have withdrawn many people from that bishop, under whose care they had been, perhaps, the greater part of their lives. This would have had the appearance of an injury both to him and them too, if they esteemed him. But nobody could be considered as injured by the addition of numbers, who had no pastor at all before. That it is not a mere hypothesis, that sentiments of dignity and rank contributed to prevent a new partition, better suited to the circum-

stances that ensued, of districts which, with great propriety, had been called parishes, when each contained no more Christians than were sufficient to compose a single congregation; appears from this, that in the canons afterwards established, it is assigned as a reason for the suppression of the χωρεπισκοποι, and for not ordaining, in time to come, bishops in villages and little towns, lest the episcopal name and authority should be brought into contempt. Such canons, however, were not always observed. Augustine, bishop of Hippo, more regardful of his Master's service, than of any honours or profits he might derive from the extent of his charge, erected a bishopric at Fussala, a village in his diocese, as the bishop's charge came then to be denominated.

But to return to the first subdivision of the pastoral charge into smaller precincts, since called parishes, the name which had formerly belonged to the whole, there can be no doubt that there had been instances of it in great cities long before the expiration of the third century; in some, perhaps, as Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, even before the expiration of the second; though it was far from being general, till a considerable time after the third. Churches, or oratories, for the accommodation of the people, now that these were too numerous to assemble as formerly in one place, began to be built, at first only in the remoter parts of the parish. They were then no more than what we call chapels of ease, and scarcely so much. They had not yet fixed presbyters of their own, but got occasionally sometimes one, sometimes another sent them, from the mother church, which was the parish church, to preside in the religious service, among those who assembled in these chapels or conventicles, as they were also called, for it was not a name of reproach then. Still, however, the idea so much prevailed, that where there was but one bishop, there was properly but one congregation, and ought to be but one altar, that as far down as the beginning of the fifth century, Pope Innocent I., as appears from his epistles,* wherein he mentions his sending the eucharistical bread to the presbyters officiating in those subordinate churches, assigns this for his reason, that they might not, on such occasions, consider themselves as separated from his communion. It had been chiefly in the century immediate-

ly preceding, when the Christian religion was legally established as the religion of the empire, and when, through the concurrence of secular with spiritual motives, there came to be an immense accession of people to the church, that there was a necessity for building so great a number of chapels, or *tituli*, as, in the Latin churches, they were, for distinction's sake, at first denominated. And hence the English phrase *to have a title*, when used of one who has obtained a presentation to a parish.

But as changes must be gradual not to shock those sentiments to which men have been long habituated, they could not, at first, have any notion of the propriety of settling, in these chapels, presbyters to officiate constantly, at their appointed times of meeting. This could not fail to look too much like what they had been always taught to consider as the principal outward badge of schism, cutting off a part from the rest of the congregation, separating, as it were, the members from the head, assigning them pastors different from the bishop,—presbyters, who, when allotted to particular charges, could not remain in the same immediate dependance on the bishop as formerly, or in the like intimate connection with the presbytery.

Gradually, however, the sense of obvious convenience wore off their prejudices; and, first in the suburban villages at the greatest distance, a single presbyter was assigned to every chapel as their minister. The chapels in the city long continued to be supplied occasionally from the mother church, or bishop's church, according to any arrangement he thought proper to adopt. Hence arose a distinction between city presbyters and country presbyters. The former were more properly, of the bishop's council; and the latter, as having their fixed charges in the country, were not entitled to officiate in the city, unless by special desire. At length the custom crept into the cities also, from the sense of its manifest conveniency. Alexandria, by Epiphanius's account, with which Sozomen's agrees, was the first wherein every church or chapel had its own ministers or chaplains, one presbyter, and one or more deacons, as its extent and necessities seemed to require. In Rome, the practice, though not so early, appears to have been, to give two presbyters to every chapel or titulus. It were easy, if necessary, to give a still stronger confirmation of this account, from the ves-

tiges that yet remain of Christian antiquities in most countries of Europe. I shall only instance in England, and, for this purpose, adduce some quotations from Burn's Ecclesiastical Law, —a book universally and justly held a standard on the subject whereof it treats, and in which the author has been careful to support, by the best authorities, whatever he advances. On the article *cathedral*, he affirms, "The cathedral church is the parish "church of the whole diocese, (which diocese was therefore "commonly called *parochia* in ancient times, till the application "of this name to the lesser branches into which it was divided, "made it, for distinction's sake, to be called only by the name "of *diocese*;) and it hath been affirmed, with great probability, "that if one resort to the cathedral church to hear divine service, "it is a resorting to the parish church, within the natural sense "and meaning of the statute." Again, on the word *appropriation*, he has these remarks:—"For the first six or seven "centuries, the *parochia* was the diocese, or episcopal district, "wherein the bishop and his clergy lived together at the cathedral church; and whatever were the tithes and oblations of the "faithful, they were all brought into a common fund, from "whence a continual supply was had for support of the bishop, "and his college of presbyters and deacons, and for the repair "and ornaments of the church, and for other suitable works of "piety and charity. So that before the distribution of England into parishes, (as the word is now used) all tithes, offerings, and ecclesiastical profits whatsoever, did entirely belong "to the bishop and his clergy, for pious uses. This community and collegiate life of the bishop and his clergy, appears to "have been the practice of our British, and was again appointed for the model of our Saxon churches. While the bishops "thus lived amongst their clergy, residing with them in their "proper seats, or cathedral churches, the stated services, or "public offices of religion, were performed only in those single "choirs, to which the people of each whole diocese resorted, "especially at the more solemn times and seasons of devotion. "But to supply the inconveniencies of distant and difficult access, the bishops sent out some presbyters into the remoter "parts, to be itinerant preachers, or occasional dispensers of "the word and sacraments. Most of these missionaries re-

"turned from their holy circuit to the centre of unity, the "episcopal college, and had there only their fixed abode, giving "the bishop a due account of their labours and successes in "their respective progress. Yet some few of the travelling "clergy, where they saw a place more populous, and a people "zealous, built there a plain and humble convenency for divine "worship, and procured the bishop to consecrate it for an "*oratory*, or chapel at large, not yet for a parish church, or any "particular congregation, to be confined within certain bounds "and limits. And while the necessities of the country were "thus upon occasion supplied, it did not alter the state of ec-"clesiastical patrimony, which still remained invested in the "bishop, for the common uses of religion. The division of a "diocese into rural parishes, and the foundation of churches "adequate to them, cannot be ascribed to any one act, nor in-"deed to any one single age. Several causes and persons did "contribute to the rise of the parochial churches." Then follows an enumeration of the principal causes. Once more on the word *parish*:—"At first there were no parochial divisions "of cures here in England, as there are now. For the bi-"shops and their clergy lived in common; and before that the "number of Christians was much increased, the bishops sent "out their clergy to preach to the people as they saw occasion. "But after the inhabitants had generally embraced Christianity, "this itinerant and occasional going from place to place was "found very inconvenient, because of the constant offices that "were to administered, and the people not knowing to whom "they should resort for spiritual offices and directions. Here-"upon the bounds of parochial cures were found necessary to "be settled here by those bishops, who were the great instru-"ments of converting the nation from the Saxon idolatry. At "first they made use of any old British churches that were "left standing, and afterwards, from time to time, in successive "ages, churches were built and endowed by lords of manors "and others, for the use of the inhabitants of their several "manors or districts, and, consequently, parochial bounds af-"fixed thereunto. And it was this which gave a primary title "to the patronage of laymen; and which also, oftentimes, made "the bounds of a parish commensurate to the extent of a

"manor." I have been the fuller in these quotations, as I thought it of consequence to produce the sentiments of a learned divine of the church of England, who is, besides, a celebrated jurist and Christian antiquary, that it might be evident to every impartial inquirer, that the account I have given is not the misrepresentation of a party, but strictly conformable to the judgment of the most candid and best informed of opposite parties.—I return to the general state of things in the empire, on the establishment of the Christian religion by Constantine.

When almost the whole people were proselyted to Christianity, these chapels were so greatly multiplied, that it was no longer possible to supply them all with the eucharist from the bishop's altar or communion-table. Then it was judged expedient to permit the erecting of other altars in those inferior churches, wherein the presbyters settled as pastors in the subdivisions, or smaller districts severally assigned to them, should officiate in consecrating the sacramental elements, and distributing them to the people. Each presbyter came to have a peculiar tie to the discharge of all pastoral duties to those allotted to him, such as baptizing, visiting the sick, instructing the catechumens, admonishing the irregular, public and private teaching, and giving testimonials to such as removed. In these, on account of the vast multiplicity which the change of circumstances had occasioned, it was impossible now, as formerly, that the bishop should be always consulted, or that the presbyters should always act by immediate direction. Every presbyter came to be considered as the pastor of the charge committed to him, and in every material respect as the same to his part of the parish, which the bishop had been to the whole. His charge itself came to be denominated παροικια, a parish, a name which, as I remarked before, had been uniformly given to the whole bishopric, whereof this was but a portion, and the latter began to be distinguished by the name διοικησις, diocese, though the distinction was not regularly observed till long afterwards. The names κυριακον and *ecclesia* came to be given universally to those meeting-houses as to proper parish churches, and then the mother church got the name cathedral, as there the throne of the bishop and the bench of the presbytery were erected.

By the account given above, one would imagine, that in some

things the power of the bishop was now impaired, though the number of his spiritual subjects was greatly multiplied. The presbyters had more authority in their respective flocks, and were not under the necessity, as formerly, of recurring always to his warrant or permission. When the charge became so extensive, and consequently burdensome, the bishops were obliged to sacrifice some of their prerogatives to the love of ease. But this sacrifice had, in effect, more the appearance of abridging their power, than the reality. The change, upon the whole, tended much, in the eye of the world, to aggrandize the order. From being the pastor of a particular flock, he was become the superintendent of many pastors. Whereas formerly he had the charge of one parish and one congregation, for these terms are correlates, he had now the charge of, perhaps, fifty parishes and fifty congregations, comprised within the same compass. He was not so closely connected with the people as before, but that was solely because he was raised higher above them, his immediate connection being with their pastors. Besides, in respect of wealth, he drew great advantages from the increase of numbers, being entitled to the same proportion from the public contributions of the whole diocese. Not to mention that the superstition, or mistaken piety, of some wealthy converts, also contributed to the increase of his opulence. And if, in regard to most official duties, the presbyters did more of themselves in their several charges, they were totally excluded by canons from confirming and ordaining, which sufficiently secured their dependance and inferiority.

Add to this, that the separation of the presbyters, from one another, by their being obliged to reside in their several parishes, and their having opportunity only when called for a particular purpose to come together, assisted the bishop in engrossing the jurisdiction in spiritual matters, which formerly belonged to the presbytery, or body of the pastors. And as in things temporal (which I showed in a former discourse) the judicial power had, before now, come entirely into his hands, the immense accession of people to his jurisdiction, added immensely to his importance. And if the aristocratical part of church government was greatly diminished, the democratical was totally subverted. The impossibility there was that business should be managed by the

people of a diocese collectively, when they amounted, as in several bishoprics, to some hundred thousands, put an end, in matters of discipline, to their pretensions. The only vestige that remained of their former rights was, that in several places they continued to assemble tumultuously at the election of a bishop. But as this affair was generally conducted with riot and clamour, and sometimes ended in blood, the principles of sound policy required, that a practice so fruitful of bad consequences, and so barren of good, should be abolished. It was not now, as formerly, a single congregation choosing their own pastor, who was to have the immediate charge of their spiritual instruction and guidance, but it was a mob, often a most outrageous one, collected from a whole diocese or province, to nominate a great man, better known by his extensive jurisdiction and splendid titles, than by any pastoral duties he had to exercise.

The train in which things were now put, gave rise to a new application of the word εκκλησια. I observed that this term had before been always used to denote either a single congregation, or the whole Christian community. When the bishop's charge was no more than a single congregation, it was very proper to denominate it by that name and call it a church in the singular number. Now that the term had, for ages, been employed to express all that was under the inspection of one bishop, and that people were inured to such phrases as these, the church of Antioch, the church of Cesarea, the church of Constantinople, and the church of the bishop of Antioch, &c. the word continued to be so applied, notwithstanding the change of circumstances, in consequence of which many congregations came to be included. This paved the way for extending still farther the import of the term, and employing it in the singular number, to denote all the churches of a province under the same metropolitan, or even one or more kingdoms under the same patriarch.

It may not, however, be improper to remark, that for several ages there remained here and there the traces of the footing on which things had formerly stood. In small and distant towns and villages, wherein bishops had been planted, and whereof the circumjacent country was but thinly peopled, the charge, even after the conversion of all the inhabitants, remained undivided, and the bishop was still no more than what every

bishop was primitively, the pastor of a single congregation, with his assistant, presbyters, and deacons. But these changes, in process of time, gave place to still greater. When the division of ancient parishes, which I shall henceforth call *dioceses*, became universal, the principal reason for confining them within moderate bounds entirely ceased, and motives of interest and ambition operated the contrary way without control. The immediate dependance of the people, and even of the clergy, upon the bishop, and the connection of ninety-nine parts in a hundred of the diocese with the bishop's church, formerly the parish church, now the cathedral, being totally dissolved, and the people more commodiously supplied in every part of the religious services, worship, sacraments, and teaching, by those tituli, now called parish churches, newly erected, there needed no more to abolish the presbytery, whose principal use subsisted no longer. The diocese accordingly underwent a new division into deaneries, so named from their including at first ten parishes, or ten presbyters in each, though they did not long confine themselves to that number. The president, called *decanus*, the dean, is properly an arch-presbyter, such as anciently, in the bishop's absence, presided in the presbytery. The deanery of the cathedral, consisting of the clergy, whose duty it is to perform there the sacred service, and to preach, is denominated *capitulum*, the chapter, being, as it were, the head of the clergy of the diocese. But the rural deaneries, as they answered little purpose, have, in most places, gone into disuse. The presbyters, who under the dean officiated in the mother church, came to be distinguished from the parochial clergy by the titles of prebendaries and canons. The former name they derived from appointments called prebends, to which they were entitled; the latter, from the regulations to which they were subjected. The chapter served instead of the presbytery in matters of election, not only in electing the inferior officers, but in supplying vacancies, in concurrence with the bishop, in the prebends or canonries, and deanship; nay, that they anciently, on the decease or translation of the bishop, elected his successor, the *conge d' elire*, still in use in England, though now no better than a form, is a standing evidence. They had the superintendency of the fabric, with the goods and ornaments belonging to the cathedral,

and were also guardians of what is now called the spiritualties of the bishopric, when the see was vacant.

In regard to the episcopal jurisdiction, which extended over the whole diocese, the chapter, consisting only of the clergy of the cathedral, could not be considered as a proper council. In the bishop's court of judicature, denominated the consistory, his counsellors and assessors in judgment when he was present, and delegates in his absence, were those called archdeacons. The archdeacon was originally of the order of deacons, as the name imports. There was but one of them in a diocese. He presided among those of his own order; was a constant attendant upon the bishop; and was considered as his prime minister. But some time after, the partition of dioceses became very general, particularly after the country bishops were, through a jealousy that they would lessen the dignity of the order, suppressed by canon, and their parishes annexed to those of the next city bishops, it was found convenient to elect those delegates, the archdeacons, from the order of the presbyters, and to have more or fewer in a diocese, according to its extent. Through the influence of custom, in opposition to propriety, the name *archdeacon* was retained. The diocese was accordingly divided into archdeaconries, and these subdivided into deaneries, not unlike the division of counties that obtains in England into hundreds and tithings. It was then judged expedient to invest archdeacons with a share of episcopal jurisdiction, both in temporals and in spirituals, within their archdeaconries, where they perform regular visitations, like the bishops, hold spiritual courts, either in person, or by their deputies, called officials, and are accounted dignitaries. The only acts peculiar to the bishop are confirming and ordaining.

I have been the more particular in this deduction, in order to give at once a faint sketch of the model which, in a great measure, still subsists in England and Ireland, and among the secular clergy of the church of Rome. The variations, indeed, are considerable, which the influence of time and local customs have produced in different places. A perfect uniformity in these things is not to be expected. We are now arrived at the second step of the hierarchy, when prelacy or diocesan episcopacy succeeded the parochial, and began generally to prevail.

LECTURE IX.

In my last lecture, I traced the origin of prelacy, or diocesan episcopacy. I shall now, ere I proceed, for the further illustration of the subject, contrast the two methods that might naturally be supposed to have suggested themselves, upon the great revolution in circumstances which the establishment of Christianity by the imperial laws, and the numerous conversions from paganism consequent thereon, occasioned in the church. There was then, indeed, an absolute necessity to make a considerable alteration in the arrangement which had subsisted formerly, in order that such multitudes of people might be supplied with pastors, and with the ordinances of religion. One way of answering this end was to attempt anew the division of Christian countries into such parishes as were no more than necessary for affording each a sufficient congregation, and to give each, as formerly, its own bishop, presbyters, and deacons, independently of every other parish. In this way, indeed, there would have been vast alterations made on the territories and local extent of pastoral charges, which would have had the appearance of dispossessing, in a great measure, those then actually in office. But the form, as well as the spirit, of the model adopted in the second century, would have remained. And, indeed, this was the only possible method whereby it could have remained unimpaired.

The other way was to preserve the same division of territory that had been made so long before, and which the people, through custom, were brought to regard as sacred, to continue the same nominal parishes in the same hands, but in order also to accommodate the parishioners without overloading the pastors, to increase the number of the presbyters, and, as they could not now all convene in one place, to erect a sort of subordinate chapels or churches, (a thing in the two first centuries probably not conceived) to affix to each, in subordination to the

prelate, its proper presbyter, who in most things was to be, in respect of this smaller parish, what the bishop had been in respect of the larger parish whereof it was a part. If the former of these methods suited more the primitive constitution of the church, the latter (which in fact was adopted) was more accommodated to the natural bent of the imagination. It had the appearance of paying a proper regard to ancient land-marks, of accommodating the people without injuring individuals, by stripping them both of the titles and of the territories which had been immemorially possessed by them and their predecessors.

Besides, though the accession of proselytes to the Christian cause was both great and sudden on the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the empire, there had been a real, though more gradual accession, for centuries before. And as this, through its being gradual, had never given rise to any new division, but, perhaps, in a few distant places, to the erection of country parishes, under the care of those called chorepiscopi, or to the addition of some presbyters to the bishop's council, they would be prepared by custom to adopt the second method rather than the first. I have hinted already, that both interest and ambition pointed to the same conduct. I might add another thing, which has no inconsiderable influence on our apprehensions of fitness, that a certain analogy to the civil government would also contribute to recommend this plan. How far this principle operated on the advancement of the hierarchy to the grandeur which in process of time it attained, as it is admitted by every judicious and candid historian, shall be evinced more fully in the sequel.

Thus a circumstance in itself merely accidental, and which we have reason to think was not regarded as of any moment by the first publishers of the gospel, namely, the extent of territory that was necessary for affording converts enow to make a congregation, (this circumstance, I say,) aided by some concurring causes, proved the secret source of that total change, in respect to government, which the church in a few ages after underwent. Some of those concurrent causes have been explained already, and we shall have occasion to investigate others of them as we proceed. But that we may, if possible, be more fully satisfied of the truth of the foregoing remark, in regard to the rise of the

dioceses, comprehending many congregations out of parishes, which, though generally the same, or nearly so, in local extent, comprehended each but one congregation, let us suppose that the apostles and other founders of the churches, instead of converting, as they did, a thirtieth, or a fortieth part of every city where they preached, had converted all the inhabitants, is it not manifest that the same principle of combining as many converts as would constitute a congregation, which made them include the whole city in the parish, when the whole could furnish no more than one congregation, would have led them to erect as many parishes as there were streets or lanes, when each street or lane could afford the same number which, as things happened, were afforded by the whole city. Had this been the case from the beginning, such a revolution in the circumstances of the church as I have endeavoured to explain to you, could never have happened.

But I promised to advert briefly to some other causes, which concurred in producing the same effect. The more effectually to accomplish this promise, it will be necessary to turn back a little, that we may trace the origin and progress of ecclesiastic courts. I have had frequent occasion to mention the presbytery. It was the radical court, and subsisted from the beginning. Mention is made of it in scripture. And as a plurality of pastors was settled in most Christian congregations, planted by the apostles, and as those pastors were required to conduct their matters with harmony and prudence, there was a necessity that, for this purpose, they should often meet and consult together. This was properly the council of the congregation. And the different congregations, with their ministers, seemed, in a great measure, independent of one another. Every thing regarding their own procedure in worship, as well as discipline, was settled among themselves. But it is extremely plain, that a total independency was not adapted to the more general character that belonged to all as members of the commonwealth of Christ. It was not the being members of the same congregation that constituted their Christian brotherhood and unity, but the being all, through one Mediator, adopted as children into the family of God, or, as it is otherwise expressed, the being members of the same body whereof Christ is the head, and,

consequently, all members one of another. As Christ is not divided, as his cause and interests will ever be the same, it was not less expedient for maintaining union, and consequently charity, through the whole Christian fraternity, that the churches should preserve a proper correspondence and intercourse with one another, than it was necessary for preserving the peace and harmony of a congregation, that there should be a settled order among them for conducting the religious ordinances, and for consulting, deliberating, and determining, in all matters of common concern.

That such a union in every thing essential to the cause, was what the apostles had much at heart, is very plain, not only from the strain of their writings, but from the measures they took to get the same rule universally to prevail, in relation to the great dispute that, in their time, was so hotly agitated about circumcision, and the other ceremonies of the law. The rule which, in consequence of the consultation holden at Jerusalem, was unanimously established by the apostles, elders, and brethren, there assembled, at the same time that it tended to unite the disciples in love, and in the observance of every thing essential, breathed a spirit of forbearance and toleration in matters merely circumstantial, that bears but little resemblance to the greater part of the ecclesiastical canons of later date.

This example, doubtless, suggested to the churches founded by the apostles, prophets, and evangelists, to devise some regular plan of intercourse with one another, in order the more effectually to promote unity and brotherly affection in the church universal. For this purpose, the congregations, in the same canton or province, agreed to have stated conjunct meetings, wherein they might discuss those matters which were of general concern; concert the measures that would be necessary both for the propagation of the faith amongst idolaters, and for the defence of its purity from internal scandals and pernicious errors. Since it was impossible for the whole people of many churches to assemble thus for consultation, it would naturally occur, as being of practicable methods the most expedient, that the pastors and deacons, who, in respect of office, were most nearly concerned in the cause, should, together with a delegation from the people of the different congregations, convene in the most com-

modious place, and treat together of those matters that concerned the common salvation.

That in these, at first, the people had a share as well as the pastors, we have sufficient ground from primitive writers to believe. I shall mention but a few of the many authorities which, in support of this matter, might be produced. Eusebius, in the synodical epistle he has preserved in his history, b. vii. l. 30. from the assembly or synod at Antioch, which condemned Paulus Samosatenus, thus titles the persons (or rather represents them as titling themselves) who had concurred in that measure, επισκοποι, και πρεσβυτεροι, και διακονοι, και αι εκκλησιαι του Θεου; the bishops, and presbyters, and deacons, and the churches of God. When the term churches is thus contradistinguished from the pastors, it always denotes the people. Nor are some of these classes represented here as actors, and others only as spectators, or passive consenters. What was acted on this occasion, is exhibited as alike the action of all. Ηναγκασθημεν ουν. κ. τ. λ. "We "were therefore under a necessity of expelling this adversary "of God, and settling another bishop in his stead [a]."

I shall produce but one other authority, which is a letter to Cyprian, the 31st in his epistles, from the presbyters and deacons of Rome, in relation to the lapsed, wherein we find these words: "Quanquam nobis in tam ingenti negotio placeat, quod "et tu ipse tractasti prius; ecclesiæ pacem sustinendam, deinde, "sic collatione consiliorum cum episcopis, presbyteris, diaconis, "confessoribus, pariter ac stantibus laicis facta, lapsorum trac- "tare rationem."—Here laymen, who had continued firm in times of persecution, are judged proper to be joined in council on this most important subject, with bishops, presbyters, deacons, and confessors, or those, whether laymen or clergymen, who had suffered for the testimony of Jesus. The same thing may be evinced from the 14th and the 26th of his epistles, and

[a] How trifling is the attempt to elude the force of this argument, by saying, that as to the inferior orders and the people, this address ought to be considered as conveying only their salutations. The only place in a letter for complimental salutations, is the end. The title bears always (and to this use it is appropriated) the designation of those by whom, and of those to whom, the letter is sent. Here we perceive, as plainly as we can conceive any thing by the help of language, the different classes of persons above-mentioned, giving an account of their joint proceedings.

from the account he gives of the African synod, holden at Carthage, for determining the question that had been raised about the rebaptization of heretics. To what purpose insist that those courts were often styled synods of bishops, and that the decisions are sometimes ascribed to the bishops, and no mention made of any other order. It is admitted, that this was the principal order, and at that time essential to the existence of a synod, which, probably, the other orders were not. Hence a synod might naturally be denominated a convention of bishops. It is admitted further, that there have been no synods in which no other members were present. From neither of these concessions can we infer, in contradiction to direct testimony, that this was the case with all synods, and that none of any inferior order had a voice among them, either legislative or judicial. In our church-judicatories in Scotland, presbyteries, synods, and assemblies, (for church-sessions consist mostly of the laity) the numbers of ministers and of laymen, who are constituent members, are nearly equal. Yet they are familiarly termed meetings of the clergy, and it sometimes happens, both in presbyteries and in synods, that none are present but ministers. They make a regular court notwithstanding; whereas lay-elders without ministers would not make an ecclesiastical judicatory. But to return,

In the manner above explained, the churches maintained a mutual correspondence, consulting with one another in all matters of very great and general concernment, insomuch that there arose a sort of republic from the association of the churches in a particular province, which was, in a manner, governed by its council or synod. Some of these synods met annually; others twice a year, or even oftener, if occasion required. The divisions of the country made by the civil government, were commonly adopted here, not as necessary, but as commodious, and affording opportunities, on other accounts, of assembling more frequently. The metropolis of the province, as being the most centric, or at least the most convenient, was the usual place of meeting; and the bishop of that place, from a sort of natural title to preside in the convention, came, by the gradual, but sure operation of custom, to be regarded as the head of the body. Hence the bishop of the metropolis came very naturally to be

denominated the metropolitan; and this term was, by consequence, understood to denote his presidency over the bishops of the province. This custom, however, did not obtain every where from the beginning. At first, the office of president seems generally to have been elective, and to have continued no longer than the session of the synod. Nor did it ever obtain in the provinces of Africa (except Africa Propria, of which the bishop of Carthage was always metropolitan) nor of Numidia and Mauritania, for in these the honour of presidency was determined by seniority. The senior bishop was president of the synod, and head of the province. Accordingly with them he was denominated *primus*, primate, and not metropolitan. In this, however, the African churches remained singular. But even this singularity sufficiently confutes those vain patronizers of the hierarchy, who are absurd enough to derive the metropolitical primacy, as well as the patriarchal sovereignty from apostolical constitution. Thus the presidency of this new dignitary over the bishops, evidently sprang from the identical causes which first raised the bishop above the presbyters, and not long after, as we shall see, subjected the metropolitans themselves.

For this fraternal intercourse was, in process of time still further extended. As all the provinces within the same prefecture had a closer connection with one another, than those which happened to have different civil governors, and to be more disjoined, this communion, in respect of ecclesiastic polity, was enlarged, and councils were sometimes convened from all the churches within the prefecture, or at least the civil diocese, which gradually gave the bishop of the capital, where the prefect had his residence, and kept his court, the like ascendant over the metropolitans, within the bounds of that jurisdiction, which the latter had obtained, from similar causes, over the bishops within their respective provinces. These prefectures were the imperial city of Rome, which presided over all the suburbiary provinces, as they were called; the city of Alexandria, which governed Egypt, Lybia, and Pentapolis; the city of Antioch, comprehending under it Syria, and other oriental provinces; the city of Jerusalem, comprehending Palestine and Arabia Petræa, originally and properly a part of the civil diocese

of Antioch; and lastly, Constantinople, which being the seat of empire, came by degrees, through the favour of the emperors, to attain such extensive dominion, and high prerogatives, as to appear, for a while, a formidable rival, if not an overmatch, for Rome herself. In the western dioceses of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, there seem to have been no patriarchs, though there were as many metropolitans as provinces, which were pretty numerous. Indeed, this want appears to have given the bishop of Rome, in after-ages, a great ascendant over them, the metropolitans being too inconsiderable to cope with him. The patriarchs were likewise called archbishops, though this denomination was also given to the primates, and even sometimes as an honorary title to those who were but bishops. There were some other bishops of less note than the patriarchs, but superior to the metropolitans, in those governments by the Greeks called eparchies, on whom the immediate title and dignity of exarch were conferred. Thus the bishop of Ephesus was styled exarch of the Asiatic diocese, and the bishop of Cesarea, in Cappadocia, exarch of the Pontic. Now each of these comprehended ten or eleven provinces under their respective metropolitans, and each province a considerable number of bishoprics. But I do not intend to enter into minute particulars. Those I have named were the chief.

This polity having been gradually introduced, and established partly by custom, partly by imperial authority, received, according to some, the sanction of the first ecumenical council assembled at Nice, under Constantine, the first Christian emperor, in which a canon (so the laws of the church are denominated) was enacted, making the subordination which then obtained, perpetual. But there are who think, that that canon extended only to the power of metropolitans; for that the patriarchal, not having yet got firm footing, did not receive the sanction of the church till about fifty years afterwards. It is remarkable, that the very same powers which the bishops had claimed and acquired over the presbyters, were now first claimed and acquired by the metropolitans over the bishops, and soon after by the patriarchs over the metropolitans. The presbytery was the bishop's court, which he had the power of convening when he judged it proper, and wherein he presided. The same prero-

gatives were exercised by the metropolitan, in regard to the provincial synod, and by the patriarch, in regard to the diocesan council. And as to the power of convoking an ecumenical council, nothing is more evident than that, for some ages, it was claimed and exercised only by the emperor. Such a council or assembly was denominated ecumenical, from the Greek word οικουμενη, the name then commonly given to the Roman empire. The charge of a presbyter was now called a parish, and that of the bishop a diocese; and sometimes, for distinction's sake, a smaller diocese, the district under the metropolitan's jurisdiction was named a province, and that under the patriarch's a larger diocese, being the same (or nearly so) with what was termed a *diocese* in the civil division of the empire. As the bishop claimed an exclusive title to ordain his presbyters, the same was challenged by the metropolitan, in regard to the consecration of the bishops of his province, and by the patriarch in the instalment of the metropolitans of his diocese. The umpirage exercised by the bishop in determining the differences that arose amongst his presbyters, came also to be exercised by the metropolitan over the bishops, and by the patriarch, or exarch, over the metropolitans. Thus there was an established scale of authority from the lowest orders in the church to the patriarchs, who were the highest, and who were the judges of all ecclesiastical matters in the last resort; for there obtained also a regular course of appeal from the inferior to the superior orders, as well as synods.

It may not be improper to take notice here in passing, that as the superior orders, above-mentioned, sprang up, and grew into consideration in the church, there was also introduced, especially in the populous cities, a number of inferior orders, by whose means the deacons were relieved of some of the more menial parts of the service, which had formerly, before they were grown so considerable, been required of them. Such were subdeacons, acolytes, readers, singers, exorcists, janitors, and some others, for they were not the same in all churches. What Cardinal Bona said of the inferior orders may be justly said of all the orders, the two original ones (bishop and deacon) alone excepted. "Contigit nimirum ecclesiæ quod hominibus solet, "qui dum tenue patrimonium habent, uno servo contenti sunt,

"qui solus omnia administrat. Si vero reditus augeantur, "servorum etiam augetur numerus; eoque magis crescit fami-"lia, quo illi locupletiores et spectabiliores evadunt. Sic evan-"gelicæ predicationis initio parvula adhuc et latitans ecclesia "paucis indiguit ecclesiasticarum functionum ministris. Cres-"cente autem credentium multitudine, et auctis facultatibus, "ex fidelium oblationibus, cum soli diaconi non possent omni-"bus incumbere, diversa onera et officia diversis personis dis-"tributa sunt; ex quo factum est ut splendidiori et augustiori "apparatu ecclesiasticarum functionum ceremoniæ perageren-"tur." [De Rebus Liturg. l. 1. c. xxv. § 17.] on which Basnage remarks "Atque ex incremento ecclesiæ non officia, "sed ministri, crescere debuerunt." True. And if the increase of the church had been solely in the number of believers, an increase of ministers, and not of ministries would possibly have sufficed. But as there came also a great accession of wealth and splendour to the *church* and *churchmen*, as the words are now understood, a variety of offices or degrees was requisite to suit the claims and expectations of men of various conditions. Kings and princes have not only many servants, but many offices under them, adapted to men of different ranks.

But to return to the superior orders. I do not say that all the adjustments I have mentioned, in regard to their respective privileges and authority, were observed uniformly and universally. There still remained considerable differences in the customs that obtained in different places. And it was hardly possible it should be otherwise, considering the manner in which this power arose. But the account given above, is a just representation of what was, in the main, the state and constitution of the church universal, during part of the third, fourth, the fifth, and some successive centuries. There were no doubt many causes which cannot be here specified, that co-operated in raising this wonderful fabric of church-dominion, which was now become a kind of oligarchy, the administration whereof rested ultimately in the patriarchs. Among these causes none of the least was (as power always follows property) the vast accession of wealth which, by the numerous conversions of Pagans of high rank, accrued at last to the bishops of the principal cities.

When, in the fourth century, Christianity, as we usually speak, became the religion of the empire, the like combination of a still greater number of churches, and such as were more widely diffused through Christendom, was effected with the assistance of the emperor. This last kind of congress was denominated a general or ecumenical council. Every one must perceive, that the greater the number of churches was, from whom a deputation was required, the fewer deputies they could admit from each. The natural consequence of this would be, that when the Christian community came to spread over an immense extent of territory, and to become very populous by the accession of multitudes of new proselytes, the privilege of representing the different congregations would come entirely into the hands of the pastors. Nay, even of these at last, especially in the diocesan synods and ecumenical councils, there would be found access for none but dignitaries. And in this manner the laity would come by degrees (as in fact it happened) to be entirely justled out. We cannot be surprised that, in consequence of this, a power which at first may be justly said to have been derived, should, in process of time, be accounted original, and that what in the beginning had been conferred by election, should at last be considered as inherent in particular offices.

From the imperfection of the ecclesiastic history of the first ages, it is impossible to trace the progress of usurpation through its various stages with all the clearness that could be wished. Enough, however, may be clearly discovered, when we compare the state of things in latter times with what we learn from the sacred records, and from the genuine undisputed remains of the apostolic fathers, to satisfy us both of the reality and of the greatness of that usurpation.

There are very few, either Protestants or Papists, who, with Baronius, and the other tools of ecclesiastic tyranny, pretend to assign to the metropolitical or patriarchal authority an apostolical original; yet there is not a single objection that can be raised against the feasibility of an acquisition of power in the bishops over the presbyters, that does not operate with at least equal force against the feasibility of such an acquisition in the Metropolitans over the bishops, and in the patriarchs over the

metropolitans; and, I may add, with equal reason, (as it came afterwards, in a great measure, to obtain) in the Pope over the whole, or greater part, of the Christian world. There is a gradation in the whole progress: the steps by which we ascend are exactly similar. Nor is the origin of any one part of the system more unaccountable than of another.

Many strenuous advocates for episcopacy do not admit, that there was originally any visible power in the church paramount to that of the bishops, who were all, in this respect, on a foot of perfect equality. There was no "episcopus episcoporum," say they, no bishop of bishops, but Christ. Yet the fact is undeniable, that the jurisdiction of the metropolitans and primates, which these men consider as mere usurpation, came, in a few centuries, very easily and universally to obtain; insomuch, that Dodwell's smart expostulation with the Presbyterians, may, without the smallest diminution of energy, be retorted upon himself. Change but the word *presbyteriis* into *provinciis*, and the argument is the same. "Quid enim? "Fatebuntur fuisse φιλοπρώτους, qui pares non ferrent, Pompeios? "Nec interim agnoscent in provinciis fuisse Cæsares, priorum "pariter impatientes?" *Will they acknowledge, that among so many Pompeys, who could endure no equal, there was not in the provinces one Cæsar, who could suffer no superior?* In fact, the rise of the bishop's power over the presbyters, is more easily accounted for, than that of the metropolitans over the bishops. The situation of things in the church was totally changed; and it could not be said now, as it might with truth of the second century, that as no secular end could be promoted, there was no rational motive to excite either avarice or ambition on the one side, and consequently to rouse jealousy on the other. An ascendant, which appeared to be the result merely of superior zeal and virtue, and attended with more imminent danger, would not be warmly opposed, whilst worldly motives had hardly scope to operate.

If, for our direction in forming a judgment concerning the persons who were originally, and seem to be naturally, entitled to have a share in all consultations about church affairs, we recur to the account given us in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, concerning the assembly convened at Jerusalem, on occa-

sion of the dispute about circumcision, we can be at no loss as to the privilege of the people in this respect. Those who composed that convention were (as the sacred historian informs us) the apostles, elders, and brethren: first, the apostles, the extraordinary ministers of Jesus, who were destined to be the founders of his church, and whose office, like the title that expressed it, was temporary, and expired with them: secondly, the elders, πρεσβύτεροι, the stated and ordinary pastors, whose office was successive and perpetual: thirdly, the brethren, that is, as the term in the New Testament is known to denote, private Christians, who possessed no particular charge or office in the church. And to cut off all pretext, that these last were present only as witnesses or bystanders, the decree runs as much in their name as in the name of the apostles and presbyters, being given expressly and authoritatively as the joint command of all the three classes mentioned. Thus, ver. 23, &c. "The apostles, and elders, and brethren, send greeting to the "brethren which are of the Gentiles. Forasmuch as we have "heard,—it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one "accord, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things."—

I do not say that that meeting could be denominated either a provincial or a diocesan synod, and far less a general council. This model of management, in regard to ecclesiastic matters, was not then devised. But that the apostles themselves, notwithstanding their supernatural gifts, called the private disciples to assist in the determination of matters of public concernment, may serve as demonstration to us of the natural title that such have (whatever be the model) to participate in those councils whereby the Christian community are to be concluded. And that private Christians continued, in the first ages, to share in the deliberations of their synods, we have sufficient evidence, as was signified already, from the ancient ecclesiastical writings still extant.

However, as in the space of a few centuries matters were, in this respect, greatly altered, and the church wore a new face, and as these came at last to be totally excluded, it began of course to be maintained as a doctrine, that those persons who did not belong to any of the sacred orders, were absolutely

unfit for being received into their councils, to deliberate and judge in spiritual and holy things; that for the pastors to admit them, would be to betray their trust, and profane their office; and for such unhallowed men to arrogate any power in these matters, would be no better than a sacrilegious usurpation.

But before such tenets as these, which savour so much of the political views of an aspiring faction, and so little of the liberal spirit of the gospel, could generally obtain, several causes had contributed in preparing the minds of the people. On every occurrence the pastors had taken care to improve the respect of the lower ranks, by widening the distance between their own order, and the condition of their Christian brethren; and, for this purpose, had early broached a distinction, which, in process of time, universally prevailed, of the whole Christian commonwealth into clergy and laity. The terms are derived from two Greek words, κληρος, lot or inheritance, and λαος, people. The plain intention was to suggest, that the former, the pastors, or clergy, for they appropriated the term κληρος to themselves, were selected and contradistinguished from the multitude, as being, in the present world, by way of eminence, God's *peculium*, or special inheritance.

It is impossible to conceive a claim in appearance more arrogant, or in reality worse founded. God is indeed in the Old Testament said to be the inheritance of the Levites, because a determined share of the sacrifices and offerings made to God was in part to serve them instead of an estate in land, such as was given to each of the other tribes. But I pray you, mark the difference; no where is the tribe of Levi called God's inheritance, though that expression is repeatedly used of the whole nation. Concerning the whole Israelitish nation, Moses, who was himself a Levite, says, in an address to God, Deut. ix. 29. —"They are thy people and thine inheritance, which thou "broughtest out by thy mighty power." The words in the Septuagint translation deserve our particular attention. 'Ουτοι λαος σου και κληρος σου 'ους εξηγαγες εκ γης Αιγυπτου εν τη ισχυι σου τη μεγαλη. The same persons are in the same sentence declared to be both the λαος and the κληρος. What, says the canonist, at once laymen and clergy? That is certainly absurd; the characters are incompatible; yet it did not then appear so to Moses. Now, would

it be thought reasonable or just, that what was allowed to be the privilege and the glory of every Israelite, under the more servile establishment of Moses, should, under the more liberal dispensation of the gospel, be disclaimed by all those disciples of Jesus, who have not been admitted into the sacred order, which they, for this reason, have called clerical.

When we recur to the use of the term in the New Testament, we find one passage, and but one, wherein it is applied to persons. The passage is in the first epistle of Peter, the fifth chapter, and third verse, which is thus rendered in our version. "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but "being ensamples to the flock." The words in the original are, μηδ' ως κυριευοντες των κληρων, αλλα τυποι γινομενοι του ποιμνιου. They are part of a charge given to the presbyters, or pastors, relating to their care of the people committed to them, who are called God's flock, which they are commanded to feed; of which they are to take the oversight, not the mastery; and to which they are to serve as patterns. The same persons, therefore, who, both in this, and in the preceding verse, are styled ποιμνιον, the flock, under the direction of God's ministers, the shepherds, are also called κληροι, his inheritance, over whom their pastors are commanded not to domineer. It is somewhat extraordinary, that in the choice of distinctions, which the church-rulers so soon showed a disposition to affect, they should have paid almost as little attention to the style, as they did to the spirit and meaning of the sacred books. Let it be observed, then, in the first place, that this distinction, so far from having a foundation in scripture, stands in direct contradiction both to the letter, and to the sense of that unerring standard. I am not ignorant that some expositors, jealous for the priesthood, render the term κληροι here, the church's possessions. Not to mention that this explication but ill suits the context, and annihilates the contrast between an imperious master and an engaging pattern, and supposeth an awkward ellipsis in the words, allow me to ask, What were the church's possessions in those days? Was she so early vested with lands and hereditaments, for it is to such only that the term κληρος, when denoting property, or possession, is applied? Or have those interpreters been dreaming of the truly golden age of Pope Gregory VII. when the patrimonies

of some metropolitical and patriarchal sees were indeed like dukedoms and principalities, and the grand hierarch himself could dispose of kingdoms and empires? In the apostolic times, on the contrary, the church's patrimony consisted mostly, I may say, in persecution and calumny, hatred and derision, agreeably to the prediction of her Lord.

Some have ascribed, but very unjustly, the origin of the distinction we have been considering, to Clemens Romanus, who, in his epistle to the Corinthians, which I had formerly an occasion of quoting, contradistinguishes λαικοι (the laics, as we should be apt to render it) among the Jews, from the high-priest, the priests, and the Levites. It ought to be observed, that it is introduced by him when speaking of the Jewish priesthood, and not of the Christian ministry: neither does it stand in opposition to any one general term, such as κληρος, or κληρικοι; but after mentioning three different orders, he uses the term λαικοι, to include, under one comprehensive name, all that were not specially comprised under any of the former; and in this respect it exactly corresponds to the application sometimes made of the Latin word *popularis*. In this view it may, with equal propriety, be contrasted with men in office of any kind whatever. Thus, in speaking of civil government, it may be opposed to αρχουσι, to denote the people as distinguished from the magistrates; or, in speaking of any army, to στρατηγοι, to denote the soldiers as distinguished from the commanders or officers.

I maintain further, that in the way the term is employed by Clement, it does not imply that he considered it as in itself exclusive of the priesthood and Levitical tribe, to which the term λαικοι is opposed in that passage. They are here indeed excluded, because separately named, but not from the import of the word. But as this criticism may, to a superficial hearer, appear a mere subtlety or refinement, I shall illustrate it from some similar examples, which I hope will be thought decisive. Acts xv. 22. "Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole "church." Here are three orders plainly mentioned and distinguished, the apostles, or extraordinary ministers, the elders, or fixed pastors, and the church, or Christian people. But does this imply that the name church does not properly comprehend the pastors as well as the people? By no means.

They are not, indeed, in this passage, comprised under the term, not because it does not properly extend so far, (which is not fact) but because they are separately named. The import of the expression is, therefore, no more than this,—"The "apostles and elders, with all the Christian brethren, who "come not under either of these denominations." Of the same kind exactly is the passage lately quoted from Peter, where the πρεσβύτεροι are opposed to the κλήροι, not as though the former constituted no part of God's heritage, or, to adopt the modern style, *clergy:* they only do not constitute that part, of which they are here commanded to take the charge. In like manner, Clement's mention of λαϊκοι, after speaking of the several orders of the Jewish priesthood, imports neither more nor less than if he had said, "And all the Jewish people." So that his manner of using this term affords no foundation for the distinction that was long after his time introduced; no more than the general argument against the encroachment of the people, or of the pastors, on each other, taken from the rigid observance which the different classes, under the Mosaic economy, had of their respective functions, affords a foundation (as some have ridiculously urged) for concluding that the orders, in the Christian ministry, were the same in number with the Jewish. So far indeed is Clement from giving any insinuation of this kind, that, in a passage formerly quoted, he expressly mentions the Christian orders as being two, and as having been clearly, and by name, predicted in the prophetical writings of the Old Testament.

But to return to the distinction of the whole church into clergy and laity: in after-ages they even improved upon their predecessors. The schoolmen (a modest race, all clergymen) thought it was doing the laymen too much honour to derive their name from λαος, populus. It suited their notions better to deduce it from λαας, lapis, a stone. Take for a specimen a few things advanced on this subject by some celebrated doctors, as quoted by Altensfaig in his Lexicon Theologicum. "Capitur clericus pro viro docto, scientifico, perito, scientia pleno, repleto "et experto. E contra laicus capitur pro viro indocto, imperito, "insipiente et lapideo. Unde laicus dicetur a λαας Græce, quod "est lapis Latine. Et sic omnis clericus, in quantum clericus,

"est laudabilis; laicus vero, in quantum laicus, est vituperandus. Clerici quoque a toto genere de jure præponuntur, "et debent præponi laicis." To these I shall add the sentiments of Cardinal Bona, in relation to the care that ought to be taken by the clergy, that laymen may not be allowed to do themselves harm by studying the profounder parts of scripture, which their stupidity is utterly incapable of comprehending. He kindly mentions, at the same time, the books which he thinks they will not be the worse for, and which, therefore, they may be permitted to peruse. "De laicis in quibus mater "cæcitatis superbia regnat, quatenus ad ea quæ sunt fidei et "morem. Cum enim sicut idiotæ presumunt sacram scripturam exponere, quæ est profundissima omnium scripturarum. "Cum iterum habeant quandam honestatem exteriorem, contemnunt vitam omnium aliorum, et merito hujus duplicis superbiæ excæcantur, ut incidant in errorem istum pessimum, "per quem excæcantur a Deo, ut nesciant discernere quid bonum est et quid malum. Quare non omnes scripturæ libros "legant laici. Quoniam nihil est tam sanctum et salubre et "pium quo non contingat abuti, sic de libris evenit, quorum "non est culpa, neque scribentium, sed scelus est in abusu: "non tamen arcendi videntur ab opusculis moralibus et devotis, "nullam in se difficultatem, nec ambiguitatem, nec absurditatem in translatione gerentibus, cujusmodi sunt historiæ, vel "vitæ, vel legendæ sanctorum, nec non meditationes sanctæ." —How condescending is the good doctor! He does not absolutely prohibit the stupid and conceited generation of laymen from reading some of the plainer books of scripture, and indulges them freely in what is better for them, story books, and godly meditations, and the legends of the saints.

I shall have occasion afterwards to trace a little further the most material changes, to which those above-mentioned, as well as other novel names and distinctions, were rendered subservient.

LECTURE X.

I HAVE met with the observation, though I do not at present recollect where, that the world is ruled by names. It matters not who said so: but experience shows us, that there is more truth in the remark, than any one, at first hearing, would be apt to imagine. When names are first assigned to offices, or even to orders of men, there is commonly an association of ideas favourable or unfavourable in some respect or other, which is derived from the more ancient to the more recent application of the term. And even if the term should be coined for the occasion, the materials whence it is taken, that is, the known etymology, produces the same effect. It invariably gives rise to certain associations; these influence opinion, and opinion governs practice. We have seen the tendency which the distinction of mankind into clergy and laity had to heighten, in the minds of the populace, that is, more than nine-tenths of the people, the reverence for the sacred order. The effect thus actually produced, in ignorant ages, through the arrogance of the one side, and the superstition of the other, is sufficiently manifest, and perfectly astonishing. I shall proceed to take notice of the consequences of some other innovations in the style adopted on these subjects.

A close resemblance, both in titles and functions, to the Jewish priesthood, came soon to be very much affected by the pastors of the church. The very names of high-priest, priest, and Levite, which the inspired writers had never once applied to any class of ministers, ordinary or extraordinary, in the Christian commonwealth, appeared to have a wonderful fascination in them, that rendered them incomparably superior to any appellations which Jesus Christ, or his apostles, had thought fit to bestow. Beside the fancied dignity, the sacerdotal titles had been always understood to convey the notion of certain rights, which conduced both to the honour, and to the emolument, of

those to whom these titles belonged. Now, having availed themselves of the supposed analogy, they thought they had the best right in the world to extend their claims much farther; arguing, that because the bishops, presbyters, and deacons, were the high-priests, priests, and Levites, of a superior, a more heavenly and spiritual dispensation, they ought to possess more of the unrighteous mammon, that is, more earthly treasure, and greater temporal power. And, what is still more extraordinary, by such wretched reasoning the bulk of mankind were convinced.

It is worth while to remark the great difference between the style adopted by the apostles, in relation to all sacred matters, and that which, in the course of a few ages, crept into the church, and even became universal in it. Under the Mosaic economy, which exacted the rigid observance of a burdensome ritual, the only place devoted to the ceremonial and temporary service, consisting in sacrifices and oblations, ablutions, aspersions, and perfumes, was the temple of Jerusalem, for no where else could the public ceremonies be lawfully performed. The places that were dedicated to what may be called comparatively the moral and unchangeable part of the service, consisting in prayers and thanksgivings, and instructive lessons from the law and the prophets, were the synagogues, which, as they were under no limitation, in point of number, time, or place, might be built in any city, or village, where a suitable congregation of worshippers could be found; not only in Judea, but wherever the Jewish nation was dispersed, and that even though their temple and their polity should subsist no longer. The ceremonies of the law being represented in the gospel as but the shadows of the spiritual good things disclosed by the latter, and its corporal purifications, and other rites, as the weak and beggarly elements, intended to serve but for a time, and to be instrumental in ushering a more divine and rational dispensation, it was no wonder that they borrowed no names from the priesthood, to denote the Christian ministry, or from the parade of the temple service, much calculated to dazzle the senses, to express the simple but spiritual devotions and moral instructions, for which the disciples of Jesus assembled under the humble roof of one of their brethren. On the contrary, in the name

they gave to the sacred offices, as well as to other things, regarding their religious observances, they showed more attention to the service of the synagogue, as in every respect more analogous to the reasonable service required by the gospel. The place where they met is once, (James ii. 2.) called a synagogue, but never a temple. "If there come into your assembly," εις την συναγωγην ὑμων. And it is well known, that the names teacher, elder, overseer, attendant, or minister, and even angel, or messenger, of the congregation, were, in relation to the ministry of the Jewish synagogue, in current use.

When we consider this frequent recourse to terms of the one kind, and this uniform avoidance of those of the other; and when, at the same time, we consider how much the sacred writers were inured to all the names relating to the sacerdotal functions, and how obvious the application must have been, if it had been proper; it is impossible to conceive this conduct as arising from any accidental circumstance. We are compelled to say with Grotius, (De imperio sum. Potest. cap. ii. 5.) "Non de "nihilo est, quod ab eo loquendi genere, et Christus ipse, et "apostoli semper abstinuerunt." It is, indeed, most natural to conclude, that it must have sprung from a sense of the unsuitableness of such an use to this divine economy, which, like its author, "is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, "but after the power of an endless life." I may add, it must have sprung from a conviction, that such an application might mislead the unwary into misapprehensions of the nature of the evangelical law.

In it Jesus Christ is represented as our only priest; and as he ever liveth to make intercession for us, his priesthood is unchangeable, untransmissive, and eternal. A priest is a mediator between God and man. Now we are taught, in this divine economy, that as there is one God, there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. The unity of the mediatorship, and consequently of the priesthood, in the strictest sense of the word, is as really an article of our religion, as the unity of the Godhead. I do not deny that, in a looser sense, every minister of religion may be called a mediator, or, if ye please, a priest; inasmuch as he is the mouth of the congregation, in presenting their prayers to God, and is, as it were,

also the mouth of God, on whose part he admonishes the people. The great reason against innovating by the introduction of these names is, not because the names are in no sense applicable, (that is not pretended,) but because, first, they are unnecessary; secondly, their former application must unavoidably create misapprehensions concerning the nature of the evangelical ministry; and thirdly, because the inspired penmen of the New Testament, who best understood the nature of that ministry, never did apply to it those names. But to return; the only proper sacrifice, under the new covenant, to which all the sacrifices of the old pointed, and in which they were consummated, is the death of Christ. This, as it cannot, like the legal sacrifices, be repeated, neither requires nor admits any supplement. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them "that are sanctified." Sometimes, indeed, in regard to the Mosaic institution, an allegorical style is adopted, wherein all Christians are represented as priests, being, as it were, in baptism, consecrated to the service of God; the whole community as a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to him: the bodies of Christians as temples destined for the inhabitation of God through the Spirit. The oblations are thanksgivings, prayer, and praise. The same name is also given to acts of beneficence and mercy. "To do good, and to communicate, for"get not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." This is also the manner of the earliest fathers. Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho, the Jew, after mentioning Christ as our all-sufficient high-priest, insists, that in consequence of our Christian vocation, we, his disciples, not the pastors exclusively, are God's true sacerdotal family. Ἡμεις αρχιερατικον, το αληθινον γενος εσμεν τε Θεε. In this allusive way, also, the terms circumcision, passover, unleavened bread, altar, sabbath, and the like, are sometimes allegorically applied by the sacred penmen. But no where are the terms high-priest, priest, or Levite, applied peculiarly to the ministers of Christ.

Doctor Hickes, a zealous asserter of what he calls the Christian priesthood, has a wonderful method of solving this difficulty. He supposes, that Christ and his apostles acted the politicians in this particular. According to him they were afraid, that with all the miracles and supernatural gifts they could

boast, it was an undertaking too bold to be hazarded, to appear as rivals to the Jewish priests. Here he inadvertently ascribes a conduct to Jesus Christ, which, in my apprehension, reflects not a little on the sincerity of that spotless character. "As a "Jew," says he, (Let. I. ch. iii. § 1.) "he was to observe the "law and the temple worship, and live in communion with the "Jews; which, though he could do as a king and a prophet, "yet he could not do it with congruity, had he declared himself "to be their sovereign pontiff, that very high-priest, of which "Aaron himself was but a type and shadow." But allow me to ask, Why could he not? Was it because there was a real incongruity betwixt his conforming to the Jewish worship, and his character of high-priest? If there was, he acted incongruously, for he did conform; and all he attained by not declaring himself a priest, was not to avoid, but to dissemble, this incongruity. And if there was none in conforming, where was the incongruity in avowing a conduct which was in itself congruous and defensible. We are therefore forced to conclude, from this passage, either that our Lord acted incongruously, and was forced to recur to dissimulation to conceal it, or that Doctor Hickes argues very inconsequentially. The true Christian can be at no loss to determine which side of the alternative he ought to adopt.

But to consider a little the hypothesis itself; the apostles might boldly, it seems, and without such offence as could endanger the cause, call their master the Messiah, the king, (a name with the Jews above every other human title.) They might, in this respect, say safely, that though their chief priests and rulers had killed the Lord of life, God had raised him from the dead, nay, had done more, had exalted him to his own right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to the people, and the remission of sins. They might thus openly, if not put him in the place of the priest, put him in the place of the Almighty, to whom the priests are bound to minister, and from whom ultimately all the blessings must be obtained; nay, and represent his power as more extensive in procuring divine forgiveness and favour, (the great object of all their sacrifices) than any that had ever been experienced through the observance of the Mosaic rites; inasmuch as "by him all that

"believe, are justified from all things, from which they could "not be justified by the law of Moses." Yet, says the Doctor, they durst not call him a priest. Now we know that the usurping of this title was not, by the Jewish institute, either treason or blasphemy; whereas, the titles and attributes, which the apostles gave their master, were accounted both treasonable and blasphemous by the unbelieving Jews, and with too much appearance of truth, if Jesus had been the impostor they imagined him; for the disciples set him in their representations above every thing that is named, either in the heaven, or upon the earth. I might say further, Did the first preachers hesitate to maintain the cause of their master, notwithstanding that, by implication, it charged the guilt of his blood on the chief priests and rulers, as those rulers themselves but too plainly perceived? But why do I say by implication? They often most explicitly charged them with this atrocious guilt. It was in the midst of the sanhedrim that Stephen boldly said, *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them who shewed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers.* Might they thus with safety to the cause, at least, though not with impunity to their persons, exhibit those priests as homicides, parricides, regicides, and, if I may be allowed a bold expression, even deicides; and yet durst not, without involving the whole in one general ruin, so much as insinuate that they also had their priests? *Credat Judæus Apella.*

In short, the whole pretext of this learned doctor is precisely as if one should say, that if, in a country like this, for instance, one were to raise a rebellion in favour of a pretender to the crown, the partizans might, with comparatively little danger or offence, style the sovereign in possession a tyrant and usurper, and proclaim the man they would set up, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, and even add, Defender of the Faith. But it would be imminently hazardous, and would probably ruin the cause, to insinuate, that he had the patronage of any ecclesiastic benefices. They may with safety denominate him the head of the church, and of the law, the source of all honours and authority in the state, and even give him higher titles than ever monarch had enjoyed before; they may assume

to themselves the names of all sorts of offices, civil or military, under him; but if they would avoid inevitable perdition, let them not style any of themselves his chaplains. In fact, the absurdity here is not equal to the former.

Let it not be imagined, Gentlemen, from what has been advanced above, that I mean to contend with any man about words and names. I know they are in themselves but mere sounds, and things indifferent. And, doubtless, any one sound is naturally as fit to serve as the sign of any idea as another. It is a matter of no moment to us, at present, whether we call a minister of religion bishop, prelate, presbyter, priest, or clergyman. And pertinaciously to refuse the use of the names which custom, the arbiter of language, has authorized, might be thought to savour of puritanical fanaticism. The allusion they plainly bore at first is now scarcely minded, and their etymology is, in regard to most people, either unknown or forgotten. But in deducing the train of changes which, in process of time, was effected both in things and in opinions, it is pertinent to take notice of the purpose originally served by the introduction of such novel names and phrases as those on which we have been remarking once were, as well as of the meanings originally conveyed by them. To causes in appearance the most trivial often effects the most important are to be ascribed.

I might add to the above observations, that some carried this species of innovation so far as even, one would think, to envy the Pagans the appellations they bestowed on the ministers of an idolatrous worship, and on those who presided in their secret and abominable rites. The learned doctor lately quoted, though a sincere Christian in his way, possessed much of that spirit, and seems to regret exceedingly that we have no such fine words and high-sounding titles as hierophant, hieromyst, and mystagogue. It was the same spirit that prompted, in the pastors, the affectation of epithets, added to their names, expressive of their virtues, and of the esteem and veneration of those that approached them, such as most holy, most blessed, most religious, most worthy of God, beloved of God, reverend, venerable, and many others, which it were tedious to enumerate, together with certain ceremonies, such as bowing the head, kissing the hands, and the like. Of these I shall only say,

that though some of them became afterwards, as words of course, mere marks of civil respect for the office, they were, in their application at first, entirely personal. If we were to settle a sort of spiritual barometer for determining the precise quantity at which piety and virtue, at any given time, arrived in the church, I could not assign a better than the use of these epithets and ceremonies, holding it as an invariable canon, that in proportion as the external signs multiplied, the substance of internal religion decreased. At no time could the pharisaical scribes be accused of greater ostentation, or more desire of greetings in the markets, and to be called of men Rabbi, Rabbi, then were, a few ages afterwards, the ministers of the humble Jesus, who had so expressly warned his followers against the imitation of their vain-glorious manners. Yet such are the manners which even, in these more enlightened times, the priestly pride of some prelatical preachers has instigated them to write whole volumes to revive.

One of the natural consequences of all those great distinctions of the sacred order was, that they made way for another, by which the ministers of religion, in a manner, appropriated the term church to themselves. I have had occasion, in these lectures, to lay before you the only undoubted acceptations wherein I find the word εκκλησια employed in the New Testament, and have observed that, when applied to the disciples of Christ, it always denotes, either the whole Christian community, or all those of a particular congregation, under the guidance of their own pastors. I have also pointed out one deviation from the latter of these original meanings, naturally consequent on the change that in a few centuries ensued, when the bishop, instead of the oversight of one congregation, had the superintendency of many congregations, that is, when his own congregation, on account of the increase of proselytes, was split into several, and when the habit of applying the word in the singular number to the whole of a bishop's charge, prevailed over strict propriety, and the primitive use of the term. This prepared men for a still farther extension of the name to all the congregations of a province under the same metropolitan, and afterwards to all those of a civil diocese under the same patriarch or exarch.

I now intend to point out another still more remarkable de-

viation; a deviation not from the latter, as those now mentioned were, but from the former of the two primitive senses, whereby the word is applied to the Christian commonwealth. Then it means, as is pretended, either the church collective, that is, the whole community of Christians, or the church representative, that is, say some, the whole clerical orders; say others, the church judicatories, especially the supreme. And this, I acknowledge, is a distinction that is favoured not only by those of the Romish communion, but by most sects of Protestants also. To many, however, and I acknowledge myself one of the number, it is manifest, that it is no less a novelty than the former, having no foundation in the scriptural usage.

The Hebrew word *kel*, exactly corresponds to the Greek εκκλησια, and is commonly rendered by it in the Septuagint, the only Greek translation of the Old Testament in use in the days of our Saviour. Its idiom and phraseology was consequently become the standard, in all matters that concerned religion, to all the Jewish writers who used the Greek language, and were commonly distinguished by the name of Hellenists. From them the term was originally borrowed by the penmen of the New Testament. From their manner of using it, therefore, the general meanings of the word are to be sought. But though the phrases *col kel Israel*, in Hebrew, and πασα ἡ εκκλησια Ισραηλ, in Greek, the whole church of Israel, do frequently occur in the Old Testament, there is not a single passage in which they are not confessedly equivalent to the phrases *col gui Israel*, and παν το εθνος Ισραηλ, all the nation of Israel. The same may be said of the phrases *kel Eloim* and *om Eloim*, ἡ εκκλησια θεου, and ὁ λαος θεου, the church of God, and the people of God. A distinction between these would have been pronounced by them inconceivable, as being a distinction between the church and its constituent members. In the Latin translation, called the Vulgate, the date of which, or a great part of which, if I mistake not, is about the beginning of the fifth century, the Greek word is commonly retained, having been long before naturalized among Christians. Accordingly they rendered those phrases in the Old Testament, *omnis ecclesia Israel*, and *ecclesia Dei*.

I know not for what reason our English translators have never admitted the word *church* into their version of the Old

Testament, notwithstanding the frequent use they have made of it in their translation of the New. They have always rendered the Hebrew word above mentioned, by the English words congregation, assembly, or some synonymous term. I do not mean to say, that in so doing, they have mistranslated the word. Either of these English names is, perhaps, as well adapted to express the sense of the Hebrew, as the appellatives of one language commonly are to convey the ideas suggested by those of another. But these English words were altogether as fit for expressing the sense of the word ἐκκλησια in the New Testament, as of the word *kel* in the Old, the former being the term by which the latter had been rendered almost uniformly in the Septuagint, and which had been employed as equivalent by all the Hellenist Jews. What I blame, therefore, in our translators, is the want of uniformity. They ought constantly to have rendered the original expression either *church* in the Old Testament, or *congregation* in the New. Terms so perfectly coincident in signification as those Hebrew and Greek names are, ought to have been translated by the same English word. There is one advantage, at least, resulting from such an attention to uniformity, which is this,—that if the application of the word should, in a few passages, be dubious, a comparison with the other passages wherein it occurs, often serves entirely to remove the doubt. They are the more inexcusable, in regard to the present instance, that they do not refuse the title of church to the Israelitish commonwealth, when an occasion of giving it occurs in the New Testament, though they would take no occasion in the Old. Thus they have rendered the words of Stephen, who says, speaking of Moses, Acts vii. 38. "This is he "that was in the church in the wilderness." Οὗτος ἐστιν ὁ γενομενος "ἐν τῃ ἐκκλησιᾳ ἐν τῃ ἐρημῳ.

But in the use neither of the Greek word in the New Testament, nor of the correspondent Hebrew word in the Old, do we find a vestige of an application of the term to a smaller part of the community, their governors, pastors, or priests, for instance, as representing the whole. The only passage, as far as I can learn, that has been, with any appearance of plausibility, alleged for this purpose, is Matt. xviii. 17. where our Lord, in the directions he gives for removing offences between brethren,

enjoins the party offended, after repeated admonitions in a more private manner have proved ineffectual, to relate the whole to the church, ειπε τη εκκλησια; and it is added, "If he neglect to "hear the church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a pub-"lican." Now I ask, by what rule of sound criticism can we arbitrarily impose here on the word *church*, the signification of church representative, a signification which we do not find it bears in one other passage of scripture? To affirm, without proof, that this is the sense of it here, is taking for granted the very point in question.

But we have more than merely negative evidence, that the meaning of the word is here, as in other places, no more than congregation, and that the term ought to have been rendered so. Let it be observed, that our Lord gave these directions during the subsistence of the Mosaic establishment; and if we believe that he spoke intelligibly, or with a view to be understood, we must believe also, that he used the word in an acceptation with which the hearers were acquainted. Dodwell himself saw the propriety of this rule of interpreting, when he said [a], "It very much confirms me in my reasonings, when "I find an interpretation of the scriptures not only agreeable "to the words of the scriptures, but agreeable also to the no-"tions and significations of words then received. For that "sense which was most likely to be then understood, was, in "all likelihood, the true sense intended by the Holy Ghost "himself. Otherwise there could be no security that his true "sense could be conveyed to future ages, if they had been "themselves mistaken in it, to whose understanding the Holy "Ghost was then particularly concerned to accommodate him-"self." Now all the then known acceptations, as I showed before, of the name εκκλησια, were these two, the whole Jewish people, and a particular congregation. The scope of the place sufficiently shows it could not be the former of these senses; it must therefore be the latter. What further confirms this interpretation is, that the Jews were accustomed to call those assemblies, which met together for worship in the same synagogue, by this appellation; and had, if we may believe some learned men conversant in Jewish antiquities, a rule of proce-

[a] Distinction between soul and spirit, &c. § 7.

dure similar to that here recommended, which our Lord adopted from the synagogue, and transplanted into his church.

Another collateral and corroborative evidence, that by ἐκκλησια is here meant not a representative body, but the whole of a particular congregation, is the actual state of the church for the first three hundred years. I had occasion formerly to remark, that as far down as Cyprian's time, which was the middle of the third century, when the power of the people was on the decline, it continued to be the practice, that nothing in matters of scandal and censure could be concluded without the consent and approval of the congregation. And this, as it appears to have been pretty uniform, and to have subsisted from the beginning, is, in my opinion, the best commentary which we, at this distance, can obtain on the passage.

If any impartial hearer is not satisfied on this point, I would recommend it to him, without the aid of any commentator on either side of the question, but with the help of proper concordances, attentively to search the scriptures. Let him examine every passage in the New Testament wherein the word we render church is to be found; let him canvass in the writings of the Old Testament every sentence wherein the correspondent word occurs; let him add to these the apocryphal books received by the Romanists, which, as they were either originally written, or translated by Hellenists, amongst whom the term ἐκκλησια was in frequent use, must be of some authority in ascertaining the Jewish acceptation of the word; and if he find a single passage, wherein it clearly means either the priesthood, or the rulers of the nation, or any thing that can be called a church representative, let him fairly admit the distinction as scriptural and proper. Otherwise he cannot admit it, in a consistency with any just rule of interpretation.

I observed, in a preceding lecture, that the term ἐκκλησια is, in some passages, applied to the people, exclusively of the pastors. The same was remarked of the word κληρος, (not as though these terms did not properly comprehend both, but because, in collectives, the name of a whole is often given to a great majority) but I have not discovered one passage wherein either ἐκκλησια or κληρος, is applied to the pastors, exclusively of the people. The notion, therefore, of a church representative,

how commonly soever it has been received, is a mere usurper of later date. And it has fared here, as it sometimes does in cases of usurpation, the original proprietor comes, though gradually, to be at length totally dispossessed. Should any man now talk of the powers of the church, and of the rights of churchmen, would the hearers apprehend, that he meant the powers of a Christian congregation, or the rights of all who are members of the Christian community? And if they should come to learn that this is his meaning, would they not be apt to say, "It is a pity that this man, before he attempt to speak "on these subjects, does not learn to speak intelligibly, by "conforming to the current use of the language?" It is, therefore, not without reason that I affirm, that the more modern acceptation, though an intruder, has jostled out the rightful and primitive one almost entirely. But as every man, who would be understood, is under a necessity of employing words, according to the general use of the time present,

Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus, et norma loquendi;

when I employ, for the future, any of the words affected by this remark, I am always, unless where the connection indicates the contrary, to be understood as using them in the sense in which they are now commonly received. Only by the deduction that has been given of the origin of this change, we may perceive, that from what is said in relation to the church in scripture, nothing can justly be concluded in support of church-authority, or the privileges of church-men, in the sense which these terms generally have at present.

The distinction just now taken notice of, in concurrence with the interferences between the civil magistrate and the minister of religion, or between the spiritual tribunals (as they were called) and the secular, gave rise to another distinction in the Christian community between church and state. When the gospel was first published by the apostles, and the apostolic men that came after them, it was natural and necessary to distinguish believers from infidels, living in the same country, and under the same civil governors. The distinction between a Christian church or society, and a Jewish or an idolatrous state, was perfectly intelligible. But to distinguish the church from its own members, those duly received into it by baptism, and

continuing in the profession of the faith, we may venture to affirm, would have been considered then as a mere refinement, a sort of metaphysical abstraction. For where can the difference lie, when every member of the state is a member of the church, and, conversely, every member of the church is a member of the state? Accordingly, no such distinction ever obtained among the Jews, nor was there any thing similar to it in any nation before the establishment of the Christian religion under Constantine.

But what hath since given real significance to the distinction is, in the first place, the limitation of the term *church* to the clergy and the ecclesiastical judicatories; and, in the second place, the claims of independency advanced by these, as well as certain claims of power and jurisdiction, in some things differing, and in some things interfering, with the claims of the magistrate. For however much connected the civil powers and church-governors are in Christian states, still they are distinct bodies of men, and, in some respects, independent. Their very connection will conduce to render them rival powers, and if so, confederate against each other. When this came actually to be the case, considering the character and circumstances of the times, it will not be matter of great astonishment, that every thing contributed to give success to the encroachments of the latter upon the former.

Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, once wrote to the empress Matilda, mother of Henry II. king of England, in these words:—*God has drawn his bow, and will speedily shoot from thence the arrows of death, if princes do not permit his spouse, the church, for the love of whom he had deigned to die, to remain free, and to be honoured with the possession of those privileges and dignities which he had purchased for her with his blood on the cross.* "Whoever has read the gospel," says the noble historian [a], "must be astonished to hear, that an exemption for clergymen from all civil justice, was one of the privileges purchased by the blood of Christ for his church." He might have said further, must be astonished to hear, as the words manifestly imply, that the church, the spouse of Jesus Christ, for the love of whom he died, is no other than the clergy,

[a] Lord Littleton.

and that the heavenly blessings, (for that his kingdom was not of this world he himself plainly declared) which were the price of his blood, were, secular dominion, earthly treasure, and an unlimited licence in the commission of crimes with impunity. It is not easy to conceive a grosser perversion of the nature, design, and spirit of the gospel. Yet by means of the artful appropriation of some names, the word *church* in particular, and misapplication of others, such absurdities were propagated by one side, and believed by the other. Nay, the frequency of the abuse is acknowledged, even by such Roman Catholic authors as can make any pretension to discernment and candour. Fleury, the ecclesiastical historian, has pointed out the perversion of the term *church* in more places than one. "Peter de Blois," he tells us, "warmly recommended to the bishop of "Orleans, to remonstrate with his cousin king Philip, and warn "him against laying any subsidies whatever upon the clergy, in "support of the war, even though a holy war, for extending "the dominions of the church; as nothing, he affirms, should "be exacted from the clergy but prayers, of which the laity stand "greatly in need." Further, he acquaints us, that this zealous man wrote also to John of Coutances, whom he exhorted to employ his credit with the king of England, to maintain the dignity of the church. "She is free," says he, "by the liberty "which Jesus Christ has procured us; but to load her with ex-"actions, is to bring her into bondage, like Hagar. If your "princes, under pretence of this new pilgrimage, will render "the church tributary, every son of the church ought to resist, "and die, rather than submit to servitude." The historian pertinently subjoins [a]; "We see here the equivocal use made "in those days of the words *church* and *liberty*; as if the *church* "delivered by Jesus Christ were only the clergy, or as if our "deliverance were from aught but sin and the legal ceremonies." Again, from the same hand, we are informed, that, in reply to a letter from Pope Boniface VIII., wherein, by the same perversion of words, the pontiff had appropriated the title church

[a] On voit ici les quivoques ordinaires en ce tems la sur les mots d'Eglise et de Liberte; comme si l'Eglise delivree par Jesus Christ n'etoit que le clerge, ou qu'il nous eut delivrez d'autre chose que du peche et des ceremonies legales. L. lxxiv. ch. xv. L. lxxxix. ch. exliv.

to ecclesiastics, king Philip of France, amongst other things, wrote to him,—"The church, the spouse of Jesus Christ, does "not consist of clergy only, but of laymen also. He has de"livered it from the slavery of sin, and the yoke of the old law, "and has willed, that all who compose it, both clerks and laics, "enjoy this freedom. It was not for ecclesiastics only that he "died, nor to them alone that he promised grace in this life, "and glory in the next. It is but by an abuse of language, "that the clergy arrogate peculiarly to themselves the liberty "which Jesus Christ has purchased for us." Which of the two, the king or the priest, was the greater statesman, I know not; but it does not require a moment's hesitation to pronounce which was the better divine. The inferiority of his Holiness here, even in his own profession, compared with his majesty, in a profession not his own, is both immense and manifest.

But amongst a rude and ignorant people, in ages of barbarity and superstition, it was easy to confound, in their minds, the cause of the priest with the cause of God, in every quarrel which the former happened to have with the magistrate.—I shall here remark in passing, and with it conclude the present discourse, that it is doubtful whether the word εκκλησια ever occurs in the New Testament in a sense wherein the word *church* is very common with us, as a name for the place of worship. There are only two passages that I remember, which seem to convey this sense. They are both in the eleventh chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. The first is, verse 18th, *When ye come together in the church*, συνερχομενων ὑμων εν τη εκκλησια. Here, however, the word is susceptible of another interpretation, as a name for the society. Thus we say, "The lords, spiri"tual and temporal, and the commons, in parliament assem"bled," here parliament does not mean the house they meet in, but the assembly properly constituted. The other is verse 22d, *Have ye not houses to eat and drink in, or despise ye the church of God?* της εκκλησιας του Θεου καταφρονειτε: where it is urged, the opposition of εκκλησια to οικια, the church to their houses, adds a probability to this interpretation. But this plea, though plausible, is not decisive. The sacred writers are not always studious of so much accuracy in their contrasts, nor is it here necessary to the sense. The apostle's argument, on my hypo-

thesis, stands thus: What can be the reason of this abuse? Is it because ye have not houses of your own to eat and drink in? Or is it because ye despise the Christian congregation to which ye belong? This, though it do not convey so exact a verbal antithesis, is, in my judgment, more in the spirit and style of the New Testament, than to speak of despising stone walls. But as to this I affirm nothing. To express the place of meeting, we find the word συναγωγη, as observed above, used by the apostle James. In ancient authors, the words first adopted, were εκκλησιας χωριον, εκκλησιας οικος, and κυριακον, whence the words *kirk* and *church*. At length the term εκκλησια, by a common metonymy, the thing contained for the thing containing, came to be universally employed in this acceptation.

LECTURE XI.

The steps I have already mentioned and explained, advancing from presbytery to parochial episcopacy; thence to prelacy or diocesan episcopacy; from that to metropolitical primacy; and thence again to patriarchal superintendency; together with those methods I have pointed out to you, whereby the ministers of religion distinguished themselves from their Christian brethren;—insensibly prepared the minds of the people for the notion, that in ordination there was something exceedingly mysterious, and even inscrutable. It came at length not to be considered as a solemn manner of appointing a fit person to discharge the duties of the pastoral office amongst a particular flock or congregation, and of committing them to his care; but to be regarded more especially as the imprinting of a certain character, or unperceivable and incomprehensible signature on a person; a character which, though in consequence of human means employed by the proper minister, it was conferred, could by no power less than omnipotence be removed. And though at first hearing, one would be apt to imagine, that by this tenet they derogated as much from the ecclesiastic power on one hand, as they enhanced it on the other, since they maintained, that the persons who gave this character, could not take it away, the effect on men's conceptions was very different. If a single ceremony, or form of words, could with as much facility withdraw as confer a gift in its nature invisible, nobody would be impressed with the conception, that any thing very wonderful had been either given or taken. The words or ceremony of ordaining would be considered as nothing more than the established mode of investing a man with the right of exercising canonically the sacred function; and the words or ceremony used in the deposition, as the mode of stripping him of that right, or privilege, so that he should no longer be entitled to exercise it. In this way he would be under the same canonical

incapacity he lay under before his ordination, which answers to what was, for many ages, called in the church, reducing a clergyman to lay communion. There would be nothing more extraordinary here, than the creating of a lord high steward, for instance, by certain solemnities accompanying the delivery of a white baton into his hands, and placing him on an eminent seat, and his putting an end to his office, by publicly breaking the baton, and coming down from his seat. Whereas for a man to do a thing, which nothing less than omnipotence can undo, and which even that, in fact, will never be employed in undoing; to imprint a character—a something which, in spite of angels, men, and devils, shall, to eternity, remain indelible, appears the result of a power, inconceivable indeed, and little less than divine.

Whence ideas of this kind originated,—ideas that do not seem to quadrate with the so much boasted power of the keys, which implies, alike, that of opening, and that of shutting, admitting and excluding, binding and loosing; ideas, of which the apostles and evangelists have no where given us the slightest hint, and of which it is plain they had not themselves the smallest apprehension; is a matter of curious inquiry, and closely connected with the subject of the hierarchy. I shall therefore endeavour briefly, in this lecture, to trace the rise and progress of so strange a doctrine.

Ecclesiastical degrees were not instituted originally under the notion of dignities, pre-eminencies, or honours, as they became afterwards, but as ministries, charges, and what the apostle Paul called ἔργα, works, 1 Tim. iii. 1. "If a man desire the office of "a bishop," says he, "he desireth a good work." Consequently if, in any thing denominated the office of a bishop, there be no work to do, it cannot be the office whereof the apostle speaks; for the misapplication of the name can never alter the nature of the thing. The persons accordingly possessed of such offices were styled, both by our Lord and by Paul his apostle, ἐργάται, labourers, workmen. "The labourers "are few," says the former, and, "the workman is worthy of "his meat." The latter recommends it to Timothy to acquit himself as "a workman that needeth not be ashamed."

For some time, indeed it could hardly enter into the mind of any man, to think himself entitled to decline executing person-

ally, whilst able to execute, a trust solemnly committed to him, and which he had himself undertaken. For the terms *ordination*, and *appointment to a particular personal charge*, were perfectly synonymous. If one, however, in those truly primitive times (which but rarely happened) found it necessary to retire from the work, he never thought of retaining either the title, or the emoluments. And though the ministers were of two kinds, the one called anciently the ministry of the word, and, in later times, the cure of souls, and the other a ministry in things temporal, for the support and relief of the poor and infirm, as was the deaconship, those in both offices were equally held bound to personal service. Nor would any one have thought, in the earliest ages, of serving by a deputy, unless for a short time, and on account of some remarkable and unavoidable impediment; much less would he have accepted another charge that was incompatible with his former one. But to be made a bishop, and in being so to receive no charge whatever, to have no work to execute, could have been regarded no otherwise than as a contradiction in terms.

Indeed, the name of the office implied the service, without which it could not subsist, that is, without which there was no office. The name bishop, as I have observed, means overseer, and this is a term manifestly correlative to that which expresses the thing to be overseen. The connection is equally necessary and essential as between father and child, sovereign and subject, husband and wife. The one is inconceivable without the other. Ye cannot make a man an overseer to whom ye give no oversight, no more than ye can make a man a shepherd, to whom ye give the charge of no sheep, or a husband to whom ye give no wife. Nay, in fact, as a man ceases to be a husband, the moment that he ceases to have a wife, and is no longer a shepherd than he has the care of sheep, so in the only proper and original import of the words, a bishop continues a bishop only whilst he continues to have people under his spiritual care. These things, indeed, are so plain, that one is almost ashamed to attempt to illustrate them. Yet the changes that too soon ensued, have turned matters so entirely off their original bottom, that propositions which, in the age of the apostles, must have appeared self-evident, require a careful developement to

us moderns; so much is the import of names and phrases altered in the course of some successive centuries. Let us therefore endeavour to investigate the source of these alterations.

When, as it happened in a few ages, the church was become populous and extensive; and when, released from persecution, it was beginning to taste the sweets of ease and affluence; when men, by consequence, were growing less zealous and more remiss; as the several congregations were supplied by their respective presbyteries, which were a sort of colleges of ministers, who, under the bishop, had the charge in common; it happened sometimes that one of these, without creating great inconvenience to his colleagues, retired from the service, and either for the sake of study and improvement, or from some other reason, resided elsewhere. The presbyters had not then separate charges, and the consistory could sufficiently supply the necessary functions with one more or one fewer. But he, who in this manner retired from the parish, did not retain any charge of the people; as little did he draw thence any emolument whatever. Thus Jerom, a presbyter of Antioch, Ruffinus, in like manner, of Aquileia, and Paulinus of Barcelona, resided little in those places.

Afterwards, as evil customs always spring from small beginnings, the number of such absentees daily increasing, this degenerated into a very gross abuse; and those nominal pastors having become odious, on account of their idle way of living, got the name of vagabond clerks, of whom frequent mention is made in the laws and novels of Justinian. But before the commencement of the sixth century, none ever thought of holding the title, and enjoying the profits of an office, without serving. Then, indeed, in the western church, the condition of ecclesiastical ministries underwent a considerable change, and came to be regarded as degrees of dignities, and honours, and rewards of past services. As formerly, in ecclesiastic promotions, the need of a particular church being considered, a person fit for the charge was provided, so now the rule was inverted, and the condition and rank of the person being considered, a degree, dignity, or benefice, was provided, which suited his quality and expectations, whence sprang very naturally the custom of doing the work by a delegate. And as one abuse commonly ushers

in another, the assistance, the presence, nay, the residence, of the principal, came also gradually to be dispensed with. Indeed, when the man is not chosen, because fit for the charge, but when the charge is chosen, or (to speak more properly) when the rank, the titles, and the revenues are chosen as convenient for the man, things must inevitably take that course. The primitive view is totally reversed. The man's accommodation is then become the primary object; the people's accommodation, if an object at all, is but the secondary at the most. That is the end —this is only the means.

In process of time, this became so frequent in some places, and particularly in some of the richest dioceses and parishes, wherein, for several successions, the residence of the occupant had been dispensed with, that through the gradual, but sure operation of custom, he came to be considered as not obliged to perform any pastoral function, or so much as to reside among the people, of whom he was denominated the pastor, and from whom he drew a considerable stipend, or revenue. The apostle's maxim was a maxim no longer. "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." Many then desired the office of a bishop, if without absurdity we can say so, who desired no work at all, good or bad, and they desired it for that very reason, because they chose to be idle. Indeed, it must be owned, the term [illegible], charge, oversight, used by the apostle, necessarily implies work. These two are indistinguishable. But in the times we now speak of, men were become much more refined than the apostles, both in distinguishing and in separating. First, sprang the distinction, then the separation of the *order* from the *office*. Hence arose the odious distinction of benefices with residence, and benefices without residence. Of much the same import is the distinction of benefices *cum cura*, and those *sine cura animarum*; from the last of which comes the English name *sinecure*. This corruption, in practice, was followed by the absurdity in doctrine, which some did not blush to maintain, that one might acquire an ecclesiastical title and salary, without coming under any obligation. The absurdity here was the more glaring, that it had been an old and established maxim of the canonists, "beneficium datur "propter officium."* The benefice is given for the office. In

order, however, to palliate, though ineffectually, their contradicting a maxim so reasonable, and so universally approved, they explained the office to mean his reading the horary prayers of the breviary; so that for once taking into his hand the breviary, and reading the prayers in public, in a muttering voice, as quick as his tongue was able to utter them, which they explain to be doing the office, (for thus the best laws are eluded,) he was entitled to a yearly rent of, perhaps, ten thousand crowns. There is a practice in England, when a man is presented to a rectory, which is there called *reading himself in*, that has but too close an affinity to the former.

But this was not all; there came insensibly into use, probably through the influence of such examples as those of Jerom and Paulinus above-mentioned, what was called loose or absolute ordination, wherein a man received the degree of presbyter, though of no particular church, and equally without a benefice, and without a charge. Some time after, for things always advance from less to greater, the degree of bishop was conferred in the same manner. This may be said, in some respect, to be much more pardonable than the former abuse, because here, if there was no office or duty required, there was no benefice given. Nothing, however, could be more repugnant both to primitive practice, and to the only meaning which the word originally bore. To ordain a man was nothing else but, in a solemn manner, to assign him a pastoral charge. To give him no charge, and not to ordain him, were perfectly identical. It has been urged in support of these honorary degrees, that a bishop is not so much to be considered under the notion of the pastor of a particular church or congregation, as under the notion of a catholic bishop, or pastor of the universal church; that this last, being the more important relation, ought to be regarded as the principal. But I beg to know what we are to understand by the term *catholic*, or *universal bishop*. In the strictest acceptation, it is applicable only to the apostles, as I had occasion formerly to observe. Nor was the title in that sense, after their time, assumed by any, till, in the decline of all rational religion and useful knowledge, it was, to the great scandal of the better part of Christians, arrogated first by the bishop of Constantinople, and afterwards by the bishop of Rome. But though it may be

allowed that, in a looser sense, every bishop may be styled a catholic bishop, that is, a pastor belonging to the catholic church, and one who hath a share in its government, he is not otherwise accounted so, but as he has the charge of a particular church, which is a component part of the catholic church. The catholic, or universal church, is no other than the aggregate of all the individual churches, and the one Christian episcopate, wherein all bishops have been said to be sharers, is the aggregate of all the individual episcopates possessed by the several bishops. Thus Cyprian (Epist. 55.) denominates the church of Christ, "Una ecclesia in multa membra divisa;" and the episcopal office, (De unitate ecclesiæ,) "Unus episcopatus, "cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur,"—One episcopate, whereof each bishop occupies a distinct part; or still more explicitly in our language, One great superintendency, whereof each is the superintendent of a part. He therefore can have no share in this one episcopate, who is bishop or pastor of no part, and has nothing to superintend. Again, the same father tells us, "Singulis pastoribus portio gregis adscripta est, quam "regat unusquisque, rationem actus sui Domino redditurus." He consequently can be no bishop or pastor in the church, to whom no portion of Christ's flock is committed, and who has none to govern or instruct. That only is a member, which has in the body a particular function, by the proper discharge whereof the good of the whole is promoted. Any thing else, such as a wen, or other excrescence, though in the body, is no member, with whatever name you may please to dignify it.

We have seen, however, that from a few instances at first, in which men, for urgent reasons, obtained exemptions from ministering, when there did not seem to result any inconveniency from dispensing with their service, and when they readily renounced both the title and the profits of the place, there gradually sprang the abuse of ordaining more presbyters and deacons than the particular church wherein they were ordained could have any occasion for, and to the care of which they were not considered as being destined. Some found their account in being once named of the order. It was a kind of episcopal testimonial of their qualifications and abilities. And, indeed, if those ordinations had been universally understood as importing

no more, and the persons so ordained had been regarded not as actual ministers, but as licentiates in the ministry, properly tried and attested, the practice, to say the least, might have admitted some plausible excuses. But this was not the footing on which they stood. Worldly motives, exemptions from secular jurisdictions, and other privileges, often induced men to court this distinction. The bishops too, beginning to consider it as a sort of addition to their dignity, to have a numerous clergy under them, even though some of these were rather nominally than really such, were often too easily persuaded to grant this favour to those who asked it. Sometimes, as I observed, even bishops were ordained at large without a diocese.

This abuse, when once it had gotten footing, increased daily, insomuch that it became necessary at last to give a check to it. Accordingly, in the council of Chalcedon it was prohibited, and all such loose ordinations were declared, (Canon 6th,) I say not, irregular or uncanonical, but, absolutely null. The words are, τους δε απολυτως χειροτονουμενους ὡρισεν ἡ ἁγια συνοδος ακυρον εχειν την τοιαυτην χειροθεσιαν, και μηδαμου δυνασθαι ενεργειν.—Nothing in language can be more express; ακυρον χειροθεσιαν, *irritam ordinationem*, a void ordination.

Further, they do not say, that when men, so ordained, officiate, their conduct is criminal, as was the style some centuries afterwards, in regard to those who officiated, in contempt of church censures, but they affirm that such can no where officiate, μηδαμου δυνασθαι ενεργειν, and consequently, that their ministrations are no ministrations at all. It deserves our notice, that notwithstanding the corrupt practice which had prevailed, there still remained so much of the primitive notion of ordination to the episcopal office, (for they had long considered the presbyters as only the bishop's curates and assistants,) as the solemn assignment of a person to a particular congregation, to discharge among them the functions of a pastor, that they could not conceive it to be an ordination, where no such charge was given, and when a man properly got no office to exercise. It appeared a mere illusion, the name without the thing. Nothing can be plainer, than that as yet they had no conception of the mystic character impressed by the bishop's hand in ordaining, which no power on earth can cancel. The canon above-mentioned, was confirmed by many posterior canons. Hence it came to be

regarded as an established rule, or maxim, in the church, that none could be ordained without a title, which, though at first it was applied only to bishops, came, after the subdivision of his parish into separate charges, to be also sometimes applied to presbyters. By a title was then understood the actual charge of some congregation. I had occasion, in a former lecture, to observe, that the Latin word *titulus* was the name that was given to the inferior churches, or chapels, allotted to presbyters, when it was found necessary, on account of the vast accession of new converts, that the bishop's charge, anciently a parish, and having but one church, should be divided and apportioned to the several presbyters. A man was said then to have a title, when he had obtained a chapel or church wherein, and a people in whose behoof, he was to execute the ministry. But as the import of words gradually changes with the manners and the times, by the term *title*, people came at length to understand only a living, whether there was any charge, any *cura animarum*, or not. Thus the canons originally intended to prevent any, under the denomination of clergy, from being idle, were construed in such a manner as though they had been intended to prevent any, under the denomination of clergy, from being indigent. And the reason they then gave for the rule was, lest such clergymen should be compelled, by necessity, to acquire a livelihood by manual labour, and thus derogate from the dignity of the priesthood. Idleness, in their apprehension, was no way derogatory; manual labour was. Paul's notions were surely very different; for he did not think that he brought any disgrace on the apostleship, when he worked with his hands at the humble trade of tent-making. But this by the way.

Some ages afterwards, Pope Alexander III. adopting the aforesaid interpretation, gave to the rule this turn, that none should be ordained without a title from which he could draw a subsistence; and added this exception, unless he has enough of his own, or by paternal inheritance; an exception, doubtless, very reasonable, if the sole purpose of a title was to afford a man whereon to live. Hence sprang new abuses, and some of the vilest artifices for making that pass for a patrimony, which had been lent to a man merely for the purpose of assisting him fraudulently to obtain ordination. In consequence whereof,

there were numbers of these nominal and fictitious clergy, shepherds that had no sheep, and overseers that had nothing to oversee, who lived in indigence as well as in idleness, to the no small scandal of the people, and dishonour of those functions of which they bore the name. At length, however, the import of the word *title*, seems to have sunk so low, as to imply neither church, nor charge, nor living, but a bare name; insomuch, that a titular priest, or a titular bishop, came universally to denote a priest, or a bishop, who (in all the former acceptations of the term) has no title. Such were those Utopian clergy, whom Panormitan has not improperly, though derisively, styled nullatenentes, holding nothing, and who have been sometimes honoured with the addition of bishops, *in partibus infidelium*; this serving as a convenient sort of general designation, to supply the name of a particular bishopric. Indeed, the custom still uniformly retained in the church of Rome, of annexing some such addition, is an irrefragable evidence of the ideas which were from the beginning entertained of the office, as incapable of subsisting without a charge.

In the later ages, the policy of the court of Rome came to be concerned in supporting this, with many other irregular practices. The power of dispensing with ecclesiastical canons was a prerogative, which that ambitious see had for some time arrogated, and not without success. It found its account in it in more ways than one. When once the minds of men became familiarized to this usage, (however much the wiser part would condemn it on account of its consequences) it would be no longer viewed in the same light. People would still be sensible of the irregularity and faultiness, but would no longer perceive the absurdity and nullity of it. Not only the commonness of the practice, but the very epithets and titles given to these nominal pastors, together with the sameness in respect of privileges, and of the jurisdiction to which they were amenable, with those properly of the clerical body, would all serve to cover the defect. People would no longer be apt to think with Leo, who was bishop of Rome about the middle of the fifth century, and is, on account of his writings, considered as a doctor of the church, who affirms positively in one of his letters, (Epist. 92. ad Rustic. cap. 1.) "Vana est habenda ordinatio, quæ nec loco

"fundata est, nec auctoritate munita." That ye may better understand the phrase *loco fundata*, it may be proper to observe, that among the Latins, at that time, when a man, in being ordained, was assigned to a particular parish, or charge, it was called *ordinatio localis*, and the incumbents, by way of distinction from the nullatenentes, were called *locales*. However much the vague kind of ordination, opposed to *localis*, was, from ambitious motives, patronised by his successors, this Pope does not hesitate to style it, not *illicita*, but *vana*; not unlawful, (though this might also have been said with truth) but of no effect. To have said the former only, would have implied no more, than that there was a fault in granting such orders; what he did say implies, that there was no real ordination in them. The doctrine of the character had not yet been discovered.

One will perhaps be surprised to hear, that our Scotch episcopal party, who have long affected to value themselves on the regular transmission of their orders, have none but what they derive from bishops merely nominal. I do not mention this with a view to derogate from their powers, but only as an argumentatum ad hominem, to show how much their principles militate against themselves. It does not suit my notion of Christianity, to retaliate on any sect, or to forbid any to cast out devils in the name of Christ, because they follow not us. If the lust of power had not with churchmen more influence than the spirit of the gospel, greater attention would have been given to the decision of their master in a like case. Even their own writers acknowledge, that immediately after the death of Dr. Rose, bishop of Edinburgh, the last of those ordained before the revolution, there were no local bishops in Scotland, not one appointed to any diocese, or having the inspection of any people, or spiritual jurisdiction over any district. But there were bishops who had been ordained at large, some by bishop Ross, others by some of the Scotch bishops, who, after the revolution, had retired to England. The warmest partisans of that sect have not scrupled to own, that at that gentleman's decease all the dioceses in Scotland were become vacant, and even to denominate those who had been ordained in the manner abovementioned, Utopian bishops: a title not differing materially

from that I have given them *merely nominal bishops.* For, as far as I can learn, they were not titular, even in the lowest sense. No axiom in philosophy is more indisputable than that *Quod nullibi est, non est.* The ordination, therefore, of our present Scotch episcopal clergy, is solely from presbyters; for it is allowed, that those men who came under the hands of bishop Ross had been regularly admitted ministers or presbyters, in particular congregations, before the revolution. And to that first ordination, I maintain that their farcical consecration by Dr. Ross, and others, when they were solemnly made the depositaries of no deposit, commanded to be diligent in doing no work, vigilant in the oversight of no flock, assiduous in teaching and governing no people, and presiding in no church, added nothing at all. Let no true son of our church be offended, that I acknowledge our non-jurors to have a *sort* of presbyterian ordination; for I would by no means be understood as equalizing theirs to that which obtains with us. Whoever is ordained amongst us is ordained a bishop by a class of bishops. It is true we neither assume the titles, nor enjoy the revenues, of the dignified clergy, so denominated in other countries; but we are not the less bishops in every thing essential, for being more conformable to the apostolical and primitive model, when every bishop had but one parish, one congregation, one church or place of common worship, one altar or communion table, and was perhaps as poor as any of us. Whereas the ordination of our non-jurors proceeds from presbyters, in their own (that is, in the worst) sense of the word, men to whom a part only of the ministerial powers was committed, and from whom particularly was withheld the right of transmitting orders to others. When we say that our orders are from presbyters, we do not use the term in their acceptation, but in that wherein we find it used by Luke, in the Acts of the apostles, by Paul in his epistles, and (if the name of fathers be thought to add any weight) by the purest and earliest fathers, Clemens Romanus, Polycarp, and others, presbyters, in short, whom the Holy Ghost has made bishops of the flock. But when we say their orders are from presbyters, we use the word not in the apostolical, but in the more recent, sense, for a sort of subordinate ministers, who are not authorised to ordain, and who, on Dr. Hammond's

hypothesis, as well as ours, were not originally in the church.

Pope Leo's way of thinking, on this subject, is indeed the way that every man would naturally think, previously to the impression which habit never fails to produce. For example, what would one think of the pretext of making a man a king, ἀπολελυμένως, that is, without giving him either subjects or a kingdom? Ye will say, But may not the right to a kingdom be conferred on a man, whom we cannot put in possession? Admit it may; that is not parallel to the case in hand. Those merely titular bishops get no more the right, than they get the possession, of any one diocese on the face of the earth. Nor was it ever denied, that if, on the pretence of their consecration, they had seized any charge, whether vacant or full, they would have been as much intruders, as though they had never been ordained at all. The only thing, therefore, that could be said to be exactly similar, would be the coronation and enthronement of a man, with many pompous ceremonies, whom ye in the end saluted king, but to whom ye gave neither the right nor the possession of a single subject, or of a single foot of territory. What could be said more justly of such a ceremony than what Pope Leo said of those ordinations? "Vana est habenda inau-"guratio." It ought to be held a sham inauguration, "Quæ "nec loco fundata est, nec auctoritate munita." Should it be urged, that the title *king* must be very blank without the name of some region or country, over which the kingly power extends. I answer, not a jot blanker than the title *bishop* or *priest*, without the name of diocese or parish. And if a bare name will serve, nothing is more easily supplied: king of the planet *Saturn*, or of *Terra australis incognita*, will sound as well, and mean as much, as bishop *in partibus infidelium*. By the way, a bishop's charge is a church, ἐκκλησία, and a church consists only of believers. Infidels, therefore, are properly no part of his charge, no more than wolves or foxes are part of the flock of a shepherd.

With the Romanists, matrimony and holy orders are both equally sacraments, and are, besides, thought to have a great analogy to each other. The relation which Christ bears to his church, that is, the church universal, is in scripture compared

to the relation which the husband bears to the wife. And the relation which the bishop bears to the particular church under his care, has been often represented by the fathers as an emblem of the relation which Christ bears to the church universal. Pope Innocent III. adopts the same metaphor, calling ordination the spiritual marriage of the bishop to his church. To this idea also the ceremony of the ring in consecration, still retained in the church of Rome, unquestionably owes its origin. No consistent Roman Catholic, therefore, can be offended, that I borrow an illustration from what he accounts likewise a sacrament, and the most analogous of them all, by the consent of popes and fathers, to the subject in hand. Now if it had happened to be (as, no doubt, if it had suited any political purpose, it would have been) the practice to celebrate marriages sometimes, ἀπολελυμένως, wherein, if you will admit the absurdity of the expression, which, in these cases, is unavoidable, you make a man a husband, or marry him without giving him a wife, what would really have been conferred on the man by such a ceremony? By marriage, indeed, you lay him under certain obligations, and give him certain rights. But as the wife is the object of the one, and the source of the other, where there is no wife, they can have no existence. The case of the bishop is precisely the same. If you give him no charge, the obligations to superintendency, and the claims of submission and support, for want of a subject, can have no existence. What then is there in the one ceremony more nugatory than in the other? For if unmeaning words will satisfy, why may not the mystical, invisible, indelible character of husband be imprinted by the first, as that of priest or bishop is by the second? Holy writ gives just as much countenance to the one as to the other. But we may venture to affirm, that if it had not suited the church's policy to have some examples of such ordinations, unauthorised alike by scripture, and by the nature of the thing, the notion of the character, in the way it has been propounded by the schoolmen, had never been heard of.

When those merely titular bishops and priests came to be elected into diocesan or parochial charges, the question was, in what manner were they to be received? To re-ordain them would have thrown an imputation on the first ordination, as

though it had been of no significancy, and little better than a solemn farce. This (though manifestly for some ages the doctrine of the church concerning them) was now by all means to be avoided, as it might tend both to correct an abuse, which the rulers of the church found their account in supporting, and to derogate from the people's reverence for the solemnities of religion. Therefore, beside what may be said to be conferred visibly and intelligibly in all regular ordinations, the charge of a certain district, in what regards spiritual matters, and the oversight of the people, there must be something invisible and unintelligible, which is nevertheless the principal, else all those loose ordinations would be mere nullities. This mysterious something they called the *character* impressed, which was no sooner discovered or devised, than it constituted the essence of the sacrament; the other particulars relating to the charge of a flock, which to an ordinary understanding might appear to be the whole, were then found to be but circumstances. And as the general practice of the church came at length to be, (for in this they were for several ages far from being uniform) to disapprove re-ordaining, as well as re-baptizing and re-confirming; and that even though the baptism, confirmation, or ordination, had been given by a heretic, or schismatic, or though the receiver had afterwards apostatized, they conceived that a character, though not the same character, was the immediate result of all these ordinances, and that being indelible, it needed not to be renewed.

It were in vain to look for this tenet in scripture, where there is not the faintest trace of any such conception. It were no less vain to search for it in the fathers, who were unacquainted alike with the name and with the thing. This even some of the Romish doctors themselves have not scrupled to admit, founding the doctrine solely on the authority of the church. But indeed on this (as on many other articles) the doctrine of the church has varied with the times. The council of Nice, the first of the ecumenical councils, expressly decreed, that such bishops and presbyters as had been ordained by Miletius, a deposed bishop, for the merely nominal or Utopian bishops were not then known, should not be admitted to serve the church as either bishops or presbyters, till they had been duly

re-ordained, μυστικωτέρᾳ χειροτονίᾳ βεβαιωθέντας [a]. If an overture of this kind, in regard to any degraded prelate, had been made at Trent, in the last of their councils, it would have been received with universal abhorrence, and considered as proceeding either from the rankest heresy, or from the grossest ignorance. But that it was no heresy for many centuries after the Nicene synod, is manifest from the uniform style on this subject, both of the ecclesiastical writers, and of the councils. Would we then track this nonsense to its source. We must dip, or rather dive, into the futile logomachies of the schoolmen; for it will be found to be the genuine production of the darkly subtle metaphysico-scholastical theology of the middle ages. Nothing could be idler than to attempt the refutation of a dogma, for which a vestige of evidence has never been produced. But were the business of refuting incumbent upon us, a little further examination of the subject, and of the opinions that have been advanced concerning it, would entirely supersede the necessity.

Two puzzling questions have been moved on this subject, which were hotly agitated, but not solved, in the council of Trent, where it was thought necessary, however, to make a decree, affirming the character in opposition to one of the Lutheran articles denying it. One question is, wherein it consists; the other, whereon it is imprinted. In answer to the former, relating to the quiddity of the character, as these sophisters love to express it, it has been observed, first negatively, that it cannot be an infusion of grace, as of faith, hope, or charity, because, say our profound disquisitors, all the seven sacraments confer grace, whereas it is only the three that cannot be repeated, the unreiterable, which imprint a character; besides, it can be neither grace nor virtue for this other reason—both these may be lost, whereas the character is indelible. As little can it be a particular qualification, which fits the person for the discharge of the duties of the office, for a man may become totally unqualified by age and infirmities, or he may unqualify himself by vice. Besides, it has never been denied, that persons, very ill qualified, have been ordained, and never appeared one jot better qualified after their ordination than before. It could not be the gift

[a] Theodor. Hist. l. i. c. ix.

of justification, because this is what the impenitent, in moral sin, does not receive in any sacrament; and yet an impenitent, in moral sin, may be ordained and receive the character. But to consider the thing positively, there were who maintained that it was a quality. Among those there were four different opinions, according to the four sorts of qualities distinguished in the schools. Some affirmed that it is a spiritual power, others a habit or disposition, others a spiritual figure; nor was the notion that it is a sensible metaphorical quality without its advocates. Some would have it to be a real relation, others a fabric of the mind; though it was by no means clear how far these considered it as removed from nothing.

As to the second question, the *ubi* of the character, there was no less variety of sentiments than about the first, some placing it in the essence of the soul, others in the understanding; some in the will, and others more plausibly in the imagination; others even in the hands and the tongue; but, by the general voice, the body was excluded. So that the whole of what they agreed in amounts to this, that in the unreiterable sacraments, as they call them, something, they know not what, is imprinted, they know not how, on something in the soul of the recipient, they know not where, which never can be deleted.

In regard to the indelibility all agreed, insomuch, that though a bishop, priest, or deacon, turn heretic or schismatic, deist or atheist, he still retains the character, and though not a Christian man, he is still a Christian bishop, priest, or deacon; nay, though he be degraded from his office, and excommunicated, he is, in respect of the character, still the same. Though he be cut off from the church, he is still a minister in the church. In such a situation, to perform any of the sacred functions, would be in him a deadly sin, but those would be equally valid as before. Thus he may not be within the pale of the church himself, and yet be in the church a minister of Jesus Christ. He may openly and solemnly blaspheme God, and abjure the faith of Christ; he may apostatize to Judaism, to Mahometism, or to Paganism, he still retains the character. He may even become a priest of Jupiter, or a priest of Baal, and still continue a priest of Jesus Christ. The character, say the schoolmen, is not cancelled in the damned, but remains with the wicked to

their disgrace and greater confusion; so that even in hell they are the ministers of Jesus Christ, and the messengers of the new covenant. Not is it cancelled in the blessed, but remains in heaven with them for their greater glory and ornament.

I have been the more particular on this topic, because it is a fundamental article, with a pretty numerous class (and these not all Romanists.) I was willing to explain it, as far as it is explicable, from the writings of its defenders, being persuaded that on those who do not discover there a sufficient confutation, reason, and argument, scripture and common sense will make no impression. An author, of whose sentiments I took some notice in my last lecture, has observed [a], that as the civilians have their fictions in law, our theologists also have their fictions in divinity. It is but too true, that some of our theological systems are so stuffed with these, that little of plain truth is to be learnt from them. And I think it will be doing no injury to this dogma of the character, to rank it among those fictions in divinity, God forbid I should add in the not very decent words of that author, (though I really believe he meant no harm by them) "which infinite wisdom and goodness hath devised "for our benefit and advantage." The God of truth needs not the assistance of falsehood, nor is the cause of truth to be promoted by such means. The use of metaphorical expressions, or figurative representations, in scripture, give no propriety to such an application of a term so liable to abuse.

[a] Hickes, Christian Priesthood, l. I. ch. ii. § 8.

LECTURE XII.

In the prelections I have already given on the ecclesiastical history, I have traced the progress of the hierarchy as far up as the patriarchate, and shown by what steps that kind of oligarchy arose in the church. The only article that now remains to be considered, and which completes the edifice of spiritual despotism, is the papacy. Ye all know the common plea, on which the retainers to Rome have, not indeed from the beginning, but for many ages past, founded the right of papal dominion; namely, first, the prerogatives they affirm to have been given by our Lord to the apostle Peter; and secondly, the succession of their bishops to that apostle, and consequently to those prerogatives. Every judicious and impartial inquirer must quickly discover, that both the premises, by which their conclusion is supported, are totally without foundation. Neither had Peter the prerogatives which they pretend he had, nor have their bishops the shadow of a title to denominate themselves his successors.

I acknowledged, in a former lecture, that Peter appears to have been honoured by his Master to be the president of the sacred college of his apostles, and the first in announcing the doctrine of the gospel both to the Jews and to the Gentiles. I have also shown, that this is the highest prerogative of which there is any vestige in the writings of the New Testament, and that there was not any particular species of power which was given to him, that was not also, by their common Lord, communicated to the rest. They are all represented as alike foundations of this new Jerusalem, which, in their Master's name, and as his spiritual kingdom, was to be reared. They all receive from him the same commission for the conversion and instruction of all nations. They are all encouraged by the same promises and the same privileges. Nay, as a convincing proof that Peter, far from claiming a superiority over the other apostles, did, on the contrary, subject himself to their commands,

we see (Acts viii. 14.) that "when the apostles which were at "Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, "they sent unto them Peter and John." Nor did Peter, any more than John, disdain to serve in the capacity of legates from that sacred body. Now whether is greater, the sender or the sent? Canonists, and other Romish writers, affect much to compare the Pope and his cardinals, to Peter and his fellow-apostles. Yet, I suppose, they will acknowledge, it would look very oddly in the Pope, and be in fact incompatible with papal dignity, to be sent ambassador from the conclave, though nothing be more common, in the members of that college, than to receive legatine commissions from him. But passing this; whatever were the prerogatives of Peter, they were manifestly personal, not official, in reward of the confession which he was the first to make, that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; a confession which may justly be denominated the foundation of the whole Christian edifice. Besides, the apostleship itself, as I showed at some length, was an office in its nature temporary, extraordinary, and incapable of succession. In point of right, therefore, no peculiar privilege can be claimed by any church as derived from this apostle.

And if from the question of right we come to the matter of fact, the special relation of the see of Rome to this eminent ambassador of Christ, the partizans of papal ambition have never been able to support their affirmations by any thing that deserves the name of evidence. It has been questioned whether Peter ever was at Rome. The only ground on which the Papist builds his assertion, that he was in that city, and founded the church in it, is tradition; and such a tradition as must appear very suspicious to reasonable Christians, being accompanied with a number of legendary stories, which are totally unworthy of regard.

In opposition to such traditionary legends, it has been urged, that mention is no where made in scripture that this apostle was ever there; notwithstanding that there were so many favourable occasions of taking notice of it, if it had been fact, that one is at a loss to conceive how it could have been avoided. No hint is there of such a thing in the Acts of the Apostles, though a great part of that book is employed in recording the labours

of this apostle for the advancement of the gospel, and mention is made of different places, Jerusalem, Samaria, Lydda, Joppa, and Cæsarea, where he exerted himself in this service. In the first of these, he assisted at the consultation which the apostles, elders, and brethren, held in regard to circumcision, and the ceremonies of the law; though this happened a good deal later than the time when the Romanists suppose his charge at Rome to have commenced. When Paul afterwards came himself to Rome, mention is made of the Christians he found there, but not a syllable that Peter either then was, or had been formerly among them. Paul, in his long epistle to the Romans, or the church of Christ at Rome, does not once mention the person whom these men pretend to have been their bishop. This silence is the more remarkable, that, towards the close of the epistle, he seems solicitous not to omit taking particular notice of every one by name, who, residing there, could be denominated, in any respect, a fellow-labourer in the common cause. Nay more, in the beginning of that epistle, he expresses the earnest desire he had to visit them, that he might impart to them some spiritual gifts, that they might be established. This, if we consider the purpose for which Peter and John were sent by the apostles to the Samaritans, converted by Philip, as recorded in the eighth chapter of the Acts, will appear at least a strong presumption that no apostle had been yet at Rome. Paul afterwards wrote from Rome, where he was twice a prisoner, to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, to Philemon, to Timothy, without taking notice of Peter in any of the six letters, or sending any salutations from him, notwithstanding the attention, in this respect, he pays to others. When he said to Timothy, "At my first answer," to wit, before the emperor at Rome, "no man stood with me, but all "men forsook me,"—there would surely have been an exception in favour of Peter, if any such person had been there. Would he have said, in writing to the Colossians from the same place, that Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Marcus, and Justus, were his only fellow-labourers to the kingdom of God, who had been a comfort to him, if Peter had been in Rome? Or lastly, when he told his beloved son Timothy, that the time of his departure was at hand, and sent him salutations from all the

brethren, naming Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, and Claudia, would he have omitted Peter, if, agreeably to that very tradition formerly alluded to, he had been not only in that capital at the time, but a fellow-prisoner in the same jail?

The only pretence of scriptural evidence, advanced by the Romanists, is indeed a very poor one, not to call it ridiculous. Peter, say they, in his first epistle, presents the salutations of the church at Babylon, by which they would have it, that he must certainly have meant Rome. If they think he spoke prophetically, they do not, by this interpretation, pay a great compliment to the throne of the hierarchy. The propriety of the application, in this view, we do not mean to controvert. But our adversaries, on this question, must be sensible, that their explanation is merely conjectural. And is not the conjecture, which others make, at least as plausible, that by Babylon is here meant Jerusalem, which the apostle so denominates, on account of its apostacy, by the rejection and murder of the Messiah, and on account of its impending fate, so similar to that denounced against Babylon? But why, say others, should we, without necessity, recur to a figurative sense, when the words are capable of being literally interpreted? To do so, would seem the more unreasonable, in this case, as the epistle is written in a simple, and not an allegorical, style. Why must the apostle be supposed not to mean the ancient Babylon in Chaldea, which was still in being, and was then, I may say, the head-quarters of the Jews in the East; a place famous for the residence of many of their most celebrated doctors, and for giving birth to some of their most learned performances on the law? That the apostle of the circumcision should go to preach the gospel in Babylon, the capital of the Jews in dispersion, will be thought to have a degree of probability, which it would require positive evidence to surmount. Yet I have heard nothing, on the opposite side, but supposition, founded on vague and obscure traditions.—But, setting aside the imperial seat of the Chaldeans, there was, at that time, a Babylon in Egypt, a city of considerable note. What should make it be thought improbable, that this epistle was written there? That either of these was the fact, appears to me beyond comparison more likely, than that the apostle should date a plain letter in so enigmatical a man-

ner, as could not fail either to mislead his readers, or to puzzle them. A tolerable reason for this conduct I have never heard. For had there been any danger to the writer from what was contained in the letter, it would have led him rather to suppress his own name, than to disguise the place where it was written, a thing of no imaginable consequence. But the openness with which he introduces his name and addition at the head of the epistle, ought, in my opinion, to remove every suspicion of that kind. The case is very different in the interpretation of prophetic writing, such as the Apocalypse, in which the style is purposely symbolical and obscure. Thus we are fully warranted to say, that there is no notice taken in scripture, notwithstanding the numerous occasions there were of doing it, that Peter ever was in Rome. I add, that there is not the least notice of such a thing to be found in the writings of any of the apostolic fathers, who had been in the former part of their lives contemporaries of the apostles, and had survived them, and consequently, of all the ecclesiastical writers, had the best opportunity of knowing. Clement of Rome, it is true, mentions Peter's martyrdom as a known fact, without specifying the place. It had, besides, been foretold by our Lord. I am inclined to think that it must have been at Rome, both because it is agreeable to the unanimous voice of antiquity, and because the sufferings of so great an apostle could not fail to be a matter of such notoriety in the church, as to preclude the possibility of an imposition in regard to the place. But with this opinion I see no way of reconciling the silence of scripture, but by saying that Peter's journey to Rome was posterior, not only to the period with which the history of the Acts concludes, but to the writing of Paul's epistles. In this case it is manifest, that he could not have been the founder, nor even one of the earliest instructors, of the Roman church. It is astonishing, that at the very time, as is pretended, of the institution of the papal supremacy, and of the instalment of the first hierarch, from whom all the rest in succession derive their authority, an authority by which the whole church, to the end of the world, was to be governed, at the time when among Christians it ought to have been most conspicuous, and to have attracted the greatest attention, so profound a silence, in regard to it, is observed on

every side. No hint is given of such a thing, or of any circumstance relating to it, by apostle, evangelist, or father. And that mighty sovereign the Pope, that king of kings, the sublime head of the church universal, whose throne was erected at Rome, is treated alike by all, as one utterly unknown and unheard of. No one seems to have formed the least conception of any such personage.

I shall admit, however, that all that has been advanced, cannot be accounted a proof either that Peter, in the course of his apostolical peregrinations, was never at Rome, or even that he was not the founder of that church; but I believe that every candid and capable inquirer will consider it as perfectly sufficient to evince, first, that he was not the bishop of the place, according to the proper acceptation of the term; and, secondly, that their bishop, whoever he was, was not, by any prerogative whatever, distinguished from any other bishop. If, setting aside the apostles, Linus, agreeably to the common opinion, was the first bishop of that see, and was ordained before the martyrdom both of Peter and of Paul, the latter, when writing to Timothy a very little before his own death, as he acquaints us himself, seems to have had very odd conceptions of the papal dignity, when he could huddle the name of the sovereign pontiff with certain obscure names, no where else to be found in the annals of history. "Eubulus," says he, "greeteth thee, and Pudens, "and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren." He does not so much as give the pope the precedency. Is this the manner in which Paul would have treated the vicar of Christ, had he known or acknowledged any such character? With regard to Peter, if what has been said does not satisfy, that he could not be the Roman prelate, the words of Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, (Gal. ii. 7—9.) an epistle written from Rome, are perfectly decisive. There Peter is expressly denominated the apostle of the circumcision, and is said to have had the conversion of the Jews, throughout the world, eminently entrusted to his care. In this, his mission is contrasted with that of Paul, who is styled by way of eminence, the apostle of the Gentiles. That Peter, then, should be fixed in the metropolis of the Gentile world, as their particular pastor, the pastor of a church consisting mostly of converts from idolatry, is palpably irreconcile-

able with the account given of him by his brother Paul. Some ancient writers, in order to remove this difficulty have supposed, that there were at first two distinct churches at Rome, one of believing Jews, of which Peter, the other of believing Gentiles, of which Paul, was the teacher. But this, for aught appears, is unexampled in apostolical antiquity. Though the Jewish converts, by themselves, continued for some time in the observance of rites to which the converts from heathenism were not obliged, these rites nowise entered into, or affected, their social worship as Christians. Being one in Christ Jesus, and members one of another, it is much more probable, that they all assembled in the same congregation, communicated with one another, and had their pastors in common. To have done otherwise, could not fail to occasion a schism between the two parties.

And in regard to the other point, that Peter was not the bishop of that city, those very testimonies evince, which have been pleaded by the Romanists, to prove that he was there, and that he was the founder of their church; so that when any ecclesiastical writers style him bishop (which, by the way, is not done by the earliest,) it is manifest that they use the term not in the strict sense, but with a certain latitude, denoting only that whilst he remained there, he took a concern in regulating the affairs of that church. Ireneus, one of the most ancient authorities that have been produced in support of the tradition that Peter was at Rome, shows manifestly, in the passage quoted from him by Eusebius, that Peter was not considered, in his time, which was near the end of the second century, as having been bishop of that church, or even as its sole founder. His words are these (l. v. c. 6.) Θεμελιωσαντες ουν και οικοδομησαντες οι μακαριοι αποστολοι εκκλησιαν, Λινω την της επισκοπης λειτουργιαν ενεχειρισαν. "The bless-"ed apostles," (observe he speaks in the plural number, as he had mentioned a little before both Peter and Paul,) "having "founded and constructed that church, delivered the episcopal "office into the hands of Linus." Accordingly, in mentioning some of her first bishops, he always counts from Linus, not from Peter, calling Anacletus the second bishop, and Clement the third. All these three are mentioned also by Ruffinus, in the fourth century, as succeeding one after another during Peter's lifetime, and not as succeeding Peter himself. Nay, he

affirms still more particularly, that Peter committed to them the office of bishop that he might not be detained from discharging the duties of the apostleship. Several of the ancients, with Ireneus, ascribe the founding of that church equally to both apostles, whom, in a looser style, some denominate bishops as well as apostles. In this manner both Epiphanius and Eusebius speak of them. The Apostolical Constitutions, a compilation ascribed to Clement of Rome, but manifestly of a much later date, though probably extracted in part out of the old apocryphal writings, called *didascalies*, attributed to the apostles, and to apostolic men, say, that Linus was the first bishop of Rome, and was ordained by Paul, and, that Clement was the second, and ordained, after Linus's death, by Peter. That most of these Constitutions, as we now have them, were not compiled sooner than the end of the fourth, or the beginning of the fifth century, Bishop Pearson [*a*], and Dr. Grabe [*b*] have put beyond a doubt. That the order about the observance of Easter [*c*] is copied from a canon to that purpose of the council of Nice, and stands in direct opposition to the primitive practice in the east, and to an express injunction in that more ancient writing, called Διδαχη αποστολων, some fragments whereof are preserved in Epiphanius, is manifest, and sufficiently shows, that the compilers made no scruple of making such alterations in those didascalies, as they judged proper for adapting them to the doctrine and usages of their own time. In the end of the fourth century, therefore, Peter and Paul were equally honoured by tradition as the founders of the Roman church, but neither of them was numbered among the bishops properly so called.

But it does not satisfy the ambitious views of Rome, to say, that Peter was the founder of their church; for they will readily acknowledge, that he was the founder also of the church at Antioch, and indeed of many others, in the different places where this eminent apostle first published the gospel. Paul too, was the founder, though not the bishop, in the ordinary and proper acceptation of the term, of many churches in Asia Minor, in Macedonia, and in Greece. And though we have

[*a*] Vind. Ign. Pars i. c. 4. [*b*] Spicileg. patrum. sec. 1.

[*c*] Lib. v. cap. 17.

not so particular information about the rest, we have reason to believe, that every one of the apostles was the founder of some.

But, says the Romanist, is it not agreeable to the voice of antiquity, that James, an apostle, was the first bishop of Jerusalem? And if that see had one apostle for their bishop, why might not Rome have another for theirs? This, if the fact from which they argue, were, as they suppose it to have been, proves only, that the point which they would establish in the conclusion, might have been that there was nothing incompatible in it, but by no means that it was. The fact itself, however, on which they build, must appear, even on their own principles, an absolute uncertainty. It is universally agreed, that the name of the first bishop of Jerusalem was James, and that he was surnamed the Just, but it is not agreed that this James was an apostle. Eusebius, Hegesippus, Epiphanius, Jerom, Gregory of Nysse, Chrysostom, have been numbered among those who held, that this James was only one of the seventy disciples. Some critics have thought, and with great appearance of reason, that out of the seventy, and after them out of the five hundred, to whom, Paul tells us, our Lord appeared at once after his resurrection, all the first pastors of the churches of Judea, in particular, were selected. This, too, is entirely agreeable to what Clemens Romanus, in a passage I had occasion formerly to quote, acquaints us, was the uniform custom, that those who were the first fruits to the faith of Christ, were constituted the bishops of the congregations planted by the apostles and evangelists. Whereas, to suppose that an apostle, who, with his fellows in that sacred college, had received this express commission, as the last orders from the mouth of his Master, "Go throughout all the world, teach" (rather convert, make disciples, μαθητευσατε) "all nations, and preach the gospel "to every creature,"—to be confined to the charge of a particular flock, is to suppose him either voluntarily to resign his important commission, or to be deprived of it, and thus to undergo a real degradation. For beside the difference, in respect of extent, between these two missions, the department of an apostle is chiefly amongst infidels, whom he is commanded μαθητευειν, to convert; the department of a bishop is chiefly among believers, whom he is appointed, διδασκειν, to teach.

An argument hath sometimes been formed in support of the papal pretensions, on the ancient use of such appellations as these applied to Rome, apostolic see, chair, throne, and the like. But it is too well known to require illustration, that these phrases, though, in after ages, appropriated by the bishops of Rome to their own charge, were, in the first three centuries, applied to all the churches indiscriminately, in which bishops had at first been placed by the apostles. Such were Ephesus, Smyrna, Antioch, Corinth, Thessalonica, Philippi. Afterwards these titles were still further extended, to distinguish the metropolitical churches throughout the Christian world from the sees of their suffragans. Of the same futile kind are the arguments drawn from the title *pope*, (a Greek word signifying *father*,) and from the ascription of holiness and blessedness in the form of addressing the bishop of Rome. These things, it is well known to all who are conversant in church-history, were at first common to most bishops, especially metropolitans and patriarchs, and were given, as well as received, by the Roman pontiff himself; though afterwards they were gradually, with many other things, arrogated by Rome as her peculiar prerogatives.

Indeed, it is so evident to those who are ever so little acquainted with these matters, that the true source of the grandeur of the Roman bishop was the dignity of the place, and not any honours he derived from Peter, that to attempt to illustrate so clear a point, would, on the one hand, be, to the impartial and intelligent, but a mis-spending of time, and would, I fear, on the other, have no effect on persons whose minds are, either by prejudice or interest, swayed to the opposite side of the question. If the succession to Peter could be fairly claimed by any, the church of Antioch, beyond all comparison, would have a preferable title. We have express scripture evidence that Peter was there, (see Gal. ii. 11.) and at least as clear a tradition that he was the founder of that see. I do not say that Peter, if he was the founder, could properly be called the bishop of Antioch any more than of Rome; but I say, that in whatever sense he can be styled bishop of Rome, we have much better ground to denominate him bishop of Antioch.

Pope Innocent, who, about the beginning of the fifth century, appears to have been the first who thought of deriving the

prerogatives of his see from the apostle Peter, acknowledges, in a letter to the patriarch of Antioch, that that church, as well as Rome, had properly been the see of St. Peter, and that it was, on that account, of very great dignity, and entitled to a very extensive jurisdiction; nay, further, that it yielded to the see of Rome only because Peter had accomplished there what he had begun at Antioch. I cannot help thinking, however, that this was a dangerous confession, made by Innocent; for it does not seem so clear a case, that it should be the last church that the prince of the apostles had founded and possessed, and not the first, which had the best title to priority in respect of honour and power. I believe most people would think it more reasonable to consider the first foundation of the first of the apostles as entitled to the preference, or first place, if there was to be a primacy in the church. Indeed, by the pontiff's manner of expressing himself concerning this great apostle, one would imagine he were talking of a mere modern, who, though settled at Antioch as bishop of the place, had no scruple to accept a call to a better bishopric, and therefore came soon afterwards to be translated (how, when, or by whom, we know not) to the metropolis of the empire.

No historical fact, however, can be more evident, than that the origin of the superiority of one episcopal see over another, arose from the secular division of the empire, and from no other consideration whatever. Hence the pre-eminence of the see of Rome, whose bishop, before the conversion of Constantine, had only the precedency among the prelates, as bishop of the imperial city; but no jurisdiction beyond the bounds of the provinces, lying within the vicariate of Rome, as it was called, which was properly no patriarchate, being but the half of the civil diocese of Italy, and considerably inferior in extent to some of the patriarchates. In every thing we may observe the dignity of the episcopal see was determined by the rank which the city itself held in the empire. Otherwise why should Alexandria have been ranked as it was before Antioch? The latter they acknowledge to have been founded by him, whom they denominate the prince of the apostles, whereas the former was not founded by any of the apostles: its erection is universally ascribed to the evangelist

Mark. But the true reason is, that Alexandria was the second city of the Roman empire, and the prefect of that capital had the precedency of the prefect of Antioch.

But above all, why was not Jerusalem vested with the supremacy; Jerusalem, the mother of churches, where our blessed Lord, by his death and resurrection, laid the foundations not of a particular church only, but of the church universal? I may add, where the Holy Ghost first descended on the apostles, where they were commanded to commence their ministry, "beginning at Jerusalem," and whence the faith was propagated and diffused, as from its fountain, throughout all the world. And even with regard to the particular church of that city, it was surely entitled to the highest honours, inasmuch as it was, in the strictest sense, founded by Jesus Christ himself. For on occasion of the election of Matthias, before the descent of the Holy Spirit, and, consequently, before the apostles entered on their office, the number of disciples that were convened there, probably not all that were in Jerusalem, was, says the sacred historian, about an hundred and twenty. And as the foundation of that individual church was laid by him who is the Lord and head of the whole, so the raising of the superstructure may most justly be accounted the work not of one apostle, but of the whole college of apostles. Yet the bishop of Jerusalem, though honoured with some special privileges, came in fact to be ranked among the patriarchs only in the fifth place, his patriarchal diocese being, in reality, but a small part, taken from the diocese of Antioch. And if the rejection of the Jews, on account of their unbelief, be held a good reason for the rejection of Jerusalem from being the capital of this spiritual kingdom, consisting mostly of converts from gentilism; why was not Cæsarea, or, as it was anciently called, Straton's Tower, preferred before every other city; concerning which we have undoubted evidence, that it was honoured to be the place, where, by the preaching of Peter to Cornelius and his friends, the door of faith was first opened to the Gentiles? Yet the bishop of this Cæsarea never attained any higher dignity than that of metropolitan.

What but its new acquired importance raised the see of Constantinople, formerly Byzantium, whose bishop, till the city was

made by Constantine the seat of empire, was suffragan to the exarch of Heraclea, to be one of the principal patriarchates in the Christian world; and to which its former superior became, in its turn, suffragan? That it arose from no other cause, is manifest from the canon which first vested this see with that pre-eminence. The canon, I mean, is the third of the council of Constantinople, in the year 381, being the second ecumenical council. The words are, τον μεν τοι Κωνσταντινουπολεως επισκοπον εχειν τα πρεσβεια της τιμης μετα τον της Ρωμης επισκοπον, δια τὸ ειναι αυτην νεαν Ρωμην. "The bishop of Constantinople shall enjoy the honour of pre-"cedency next after the bishop of Rome, because it is new "Rome." The first place is given to Rome as the elder sister, and that from which the empire still continued to be named. The second is given to Constantinople, because now an imperial city as well as the other. In the reason assigned for giving the second place to the latter, they clearly indicate the only reason then known for giving the first place to the former. This is still more explicitly expressed in the twenty-eighth canon of the council of Chalcedon, holden in 451, being the fourth ecumenical council. It is said to have consisted of 630 bishops, and consequently, was the most numerous that had yet been assembled. The reason on which the fathers ground their resolve, is thus expressed in the canon: Και γαρ τω θρονω της πρεσβυτερας Ρωμης, δια το βασιλευειν την πολιν εκεινην, οι πατερες εικοτως αποδεδωκασι τα πρεσβεια, και τω αυτω σκοπω κινουμενοι οι ρν' θεοφιλεστατοι επισκοποι, τα ισα πρεσβεια απενειμαν τω της νεας Ρωμης ἁγιωτατω θρονω, ευλογως κρινοντες την βασιλεια και συγκλητω τιμηθεισαν πολιν, και των ισων απολαυουσαν πρεσβειων τη πρεσβυτερα βασιλιδι Ρωμη, και εν τοις εκκλησιαστικοις, ὡς εκεινην μεγαλυνεσθαι πραγμασι, δευτεραν μετ' εκεινην ὑπαρχουσαν—"Whereas the fathers, with great propriety, "bestowed the chief honours on the see of Old Rome, BE"CAUSE IT WAS THE IMPERIAL CITY, and whereas the 150 "(Constantinopolitan) fathers beloved of God, actuated by the "same motive, conferred the like dignity on the most holy see "of New Rome, (that is, Constantinople) judging it reasonable "that the city honoured to be the seat of empire, and of the "senate, and equal in civil privileges with ancient royal Rome, "should be equally distinguished also by ecclesiastical privi"leges, and enjoy the second place in the church, being next "to Old Rome—we ratify and confirm," &c. And as the council of Constantinople had given rank to that patriarch, this

of Chalcedon proceeded to add jurisdiction. My principal reasons for adducing this passage are to show first, that the rank and dignity of the several bishops was, at that time, considered by them as conferred by the church, and not as derived from Jesus Christ, St. Peter, or the college of apostles, none of whom are so much as mentioned by them; that therefore it is of human, not of divine institution: and, secondly, that the only reason assigned for the preference given is the dignity of the city, and the rank it bears in the empire. It is to no purpose to urge, that the bishop of Rome could never be prevailed on to ratify this canon of Chalcedon. It obtained, notwithstanding his opposition, was engrossed in the acts of the council, and remained a rule in the east ever after. It was no wonder, that the sudden rise of this new dignitary roused the jealousy of Rome. Constantinople, from a place of no consideration, was, in half a century, become the principal see in the east. An obscure suffragan was made chief of the Greek patriarchs, and next in rank to the Roman pontiff. Since the removal of the seat of empire, Constantinople was grown a great and flourishing city, and still appeared to be increasing; Rome was as evidently on the decline. It was natural for the pope to argue in this manner: "If things proceed thus, can it be doubted, "that a bishopric, scarcely named in former ages, which has, "with so little ceremony, been at one step exalted above all "the patriarchates of the east, and had the second place in the "church assigned it, will, at the next, with as little ceremony, "be raised above the Roman see, and made the first?" There appeared some danger in overlooking these alterations, and therefore, under pretence of defending the rights of the sees of Alexandria and Antioch, and the canons of Nice, which, by the way, had not a syllable relating to the question, he warded off the evil which he suspected it would bring upon Rome. It is, however, sufficient for my purpose to show, what may be justly called the sense of the universal church at that time on this article; for the above canon was subscribed by all the bishops of that numerous council, with the exception of a very few, who favoured Rome. Allow me to add, that these councils, the Constantinopolitan and the Chalcedonian, are two of the four which pope Gregory the Great declared he held in equal vene-

ration with the four gospels, and which are to this day in the highest authority in the Romish church. I pass the consideration of the validity of those canons, leaving it to the discussion of scholastic sophisters and Roman canonists. I regard them solely as the unanimous testimony of the leading men, and, consequently, of the church in those periods, concerning the source of the prerogatives enjoyed by particular sees, and the grounds on which they were bestowed. And in this view they are certainly of the greatest moment.

Indeed, so notorious it is, that the dignity and authority of the sees were almost entirely correspondent to the dignity and authority of the civil governors of the place, that when the emperor judged it proper to divide a province into two, a thing which often happened, giving them separate magistrates: the ecclesiastical polity underwent the like alteration, and the bishop of the new metropolis was raised to the dignity of a metropolitan. The provincial churches also were divided, and all those situated within the province newly erected, were withdrawn from their old metropolitan. This would not fail to create great animosities and discontents among the clergy, as well as to prove a strong incentive to ambitious prelates, who had interest at court, to apply for such a division of the province, as would raise their city to a metropolis. But as this practice was attended with great inconveniences, and productive of very gross abuses, a timely check was put to such alterations in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, by the council of Chalcedon, that very council which established the prerogatives of the Constantinopolitan patriarch. Nothing, however, can be more evident, or is more universally admitted by all who know any thing of these matters, than that the whole fabric of ecclesiastical government was raised on the model of the civil polity, that the very manner in which power was distributed, and apportioned to the great officers of the state, was, in most cases, servilely copied by the rulers of the church. Nay, the very erection of their dignities, and the investiture of the dignitaries, were generally effected by the imperial edict; for those never hesitated to acknowledge the power of the emperor in these matters, who were themselves benefited by his power. Afterwards, indeed, when perfectly secured by long possession, the possessors were

not so willing to acknowledge the source whence their wealth and honours were originally derived.

In regard to Rome in particular, it is astonishing to think how suddenly, upon the establishment of Christianity, its bishops arose, by the munificence of the emperors, and the misjudged devotion of some great and opulent proselytes, especially among the ladies, from a state of obscurity to the most envied opulence and grandeur. Ammianus Marcellinus, a pagan and contemporary writer, speaking of the horrible conflict betwixt Damasus and Ursinus for the episcopal chair of Rome, which happened about the middle of the fourth century, a conflict in which the prefect of the city was compelled to take refuge in the suburbs, and which ended in the cruel massacre of a hundred and thirty-seven people in the basilic of Liberius, says, in order to account, in some measure, for the violence and fury with which this contest had been conducted, "I must acknow-"ledge, that when I reflect on the pomp attending that dignity, "I am not surprised, that those who are fond of parade should "quarrel and fight, and strain every nerve to attain this office, "since they are sure, if they succeed, to be enriched with the "presents of the matrons, to appear abroad no more on foot, "but in stately chariots, and gorgeously attired, to keep sump-"tuous tables, nay, and to surpass kings themselves in the "splendour and magnificence of their entertainments. But "how happy would they be, if despising the voluptuousness "and show of the city, which they plead in excuse for their "luxury, they followed the example of some bishops in the "provinces, who, by the temperance and frugality of their diet, "the poverty and plainness of their dress, the unassuming mo-"desty of their looks, approve themselves pure and upright to "the eternal God, and all his genuine worshippers [a]." I bring this quotation the rather, because it affords the testimony of a heathen, (who, therefore, cannot be supposed partial to the cause of Christianity) that to whatever pitch of pride and arrogance the church potentates in the great cities, were now arrived, there were not wanting Christian pastors in the country, whose lives did honour to their profession, showing that the spirit of the meek and humble Jesus was not totally extinct

[a] Lib. xxvii. cap. 3.

among those who were denominated his followers and servants. Let me add, that the readiness with which that author gives so honourable a testimony to the temper and manners of several ministers of Christ, raises him above the suspicion of being actuated by malice to the cause, in the reproaches he throws on the ostentation and sensuality of others.

In confirmation, if it be thought necessary, of the account given by an infidel, of the grandeur, and even more than royal state, in which the Roman pontiff then lived, I shall add what is told by Jerom, a Christian writer, and a father of the church, who was also a contemporary and an intimate friend of the bishop. Prætextatus, a nobleman of the highest rank, and honoured with the greatest and most lucrative employments of the empire, but zealously attached to paganism, conversing once familiarily with Damasus, the successful candidate, on the subject of their different religions, said to the prelate, in a sort of pleasantry, "Make me but bishop of Rome, and I will turn Christian immediately." Now it deserves to be remarked, that Christianity, considered as an establishment, supported by legal sanctions, and enjoying the countenance of the magistrate, was then only of about fifty years standing. It was no longer since the church had emerged out of obscurity, and been released from a most bloody persecution, begun by Dioclesian, about the beginning of the century, and continued with little interruption for ten successive years. That in so short a compass this episcopal see should have mounted almost to the summit of earthly grandeur, would be looked upon, if not so amply attested, as a thing incredible.

But whatever its wealth and splendour might be even at this early period, its power was yet but in its infancy. It is, however, certain, that a remarkable superiority in respect of property, is the surest foundation on which a permanent dominion can be raised. But to account, in some measure, for the suddenness of this acquisition of riches, it ought to be observed, that it had been, long before, customary for all Christians that were capable, but especially the more wealthy, to make liberal offerings to the church, as on other occasions, so particularly at the celebration of the more solemn festivals. These offerings, after supplying the needs of the church, and supporting its ministers,

were understood, at first, to be devoted to the relief of the distressed and needy, strangers, orphans, widows, prisoners, and sick. Accordingly, with these truly pious and charitable donations, the bishops of Rome used, in earlier times, in the first place, to relieve the poor of their own church, and when that end was attained, to send the overplus to other churches, where the poor were numerous, the people in general less affluent, and, consequently, the offerings insufficient.

Of this humane and generous practice, the duration was only whilst the church itself remained in affliction and obscurity. It may appear a paradox, but it is too well confirmed by experience, that nothing is a greater enemy to generosity, than the unexpected acquisition of boundless wealth. This proves almost invariably the parent of ambition. And when ambition comes to supplant charity, and a pompous species of superstition to be substituted for rational devotion, the poor are forgotten on all sides. The exaltation of the priesthood, the exterior glory of the sacred service, magnificent temples, richly furnished and decorated, gorgeous vestments, with whatever can dazzle the senses of those present at the public ministrations, appear even to the bulk of the people the noblest object of their liberality, as tending more than any other to the honour of God, and the advancement of religion. In consequence of this gradual change in men's sentiments, the oblations made to the church would be gradually alienated from the primitive purpose, not only with impunity, but even with general approbation. Though the support of the ministers, in many places, did not now, as formerly, depend on the voluntary contributions of the people, all the principal sees having fixed revenues and temporalities annexed to them, the ministers were still, by a kind of prescription, or immemorial custom, considered as having a personal interest in the sacred offerings. And though these were not wanted for the supply of the necessaries, or even of the conveniences of life, there is no imaginable limit can be set to its luxuries, and for the supply of these there would ever be occasion. The thoughts of these upstart princes would then naturally fix on splendid equipages, numerous retinues, princely apparel, expensive tables, superb palaces, and whatever else could feed their vanity, and put them upon the level (as in a few cities,

Rome and Constantinople in particular, they were quickly put upon the level) with the greatest monarchs.

But to take a brief survey of the principal causes which contributed to raise the papacy to that zenith of glory, which it actually reached, shall be reserved for the subject of some other lectures. In this I have only examined the foundation.

LECTURE XIII.

In my last lecture, I entered on the consideration of the rise of papal dominion. I showed that the pretensions made by papists, in regard to the distinguishing prerogatives of the apostle Peter, and in regard to the title which the Roman pontiff derives from him, are equally without foundation; that neither had that apostle any such prerogatives as they ascribe to him, nor has the bishop of Rome a better title to be called his successor than any other pastor in the Christian church. I took notice, that the very first pontiff who advanced this plea as the foundation of his primacy and power, lived no earlier than the fifth century. I showed particularly, that the true origin of the Pope's supremacy was the dignity of the see, and not of its founder, the wealth and temporal advantages derived from the congregation of that great metropolis, and not any spiritual authority and jurisdiction, transmitted from the fisherman of Galilee, who was styled the apostle, not of the nations, but of the circumcision. I showed further, that this account of the origin of Romish dominion, perfectly corresponds with the model that the church very soon assumed in conformity to the civil constitution of the empire; the dignity and secular power of the magistrate, in every city, especially in every capital, almost invariably determining the dignity and spiritual jurisdiction of its pastor. Hence the different degrees among the bishops, of suffragan, primate, or metropolitan, and exarch. Hence also among those of the same class, the exarchs, a few, who presided in the principal cities of the empire, such as Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch, were dignified with the title of patriarch. And even among these, the precedency was always regulated by the rank of their respective prefects. To these, indeed, was added Jerusalem, from respect to the place where Christ had consummated his ministry, and our redemption had been accomplished, that is, where expiation had been

made for the sin of man by the sacrifice of the Son of God, where the first fruits of the resurrection had been produced in him who was both the founder and the finisher of the faith, where the Holy Spirit was first given, and whence the gospel issued, as from its fountain, to bless, with its salutary streams, the remotest parts of the habitable world. But this was the only city which was honoured with any pre-eminence from other considerations than such as were merely secular. And even Jerusalem came but in the fifth place.

I observed before, that power has a sort of attractive force, which gives it a tendency to accumulate, insomuch that what, in the beginning, is a distinction barely perceptible, grows, in process of time, a most remarkable disparity. In every new and doubtful case that may occur, the bias of the imagination is in favour of him who occupies the higher place, were the superiority ever so inconsiderable. And what was originally no more than precedency in rank, becomes at length a real superiority in power. The effect will be considerably accelerated, if superior opulence join its aid in producing it. This was eminently the case with Rome, the wealthiest see, as well as the most respectable, because the seat of empire, of any in the church.

But it may be urged, on the other side, that when the imperial throne was transferred from Rome to Constantinople, it might have been expected, that this latter place would rise to a still greater eminence than the former. That, indeed, notwithstanding its obscurity for ages, it did rise to very great eminence, in consequence of the translation of the seat of empire, is itself a very strong confirmation of the doctrine here maintained. That, though the youngest of the patriarchal sees, it did, through the favour of the emperors, arise to such distinguished grandeur and authority, as long to appear a formidable rival to haughty Rome, and often to awake her most jealous attention, is a point which will not be disputed by any who is but moderately conversant in ecclesiastic history. But then it is to be observed, that Rome had been a church in the highest estimation for ages before the name of Constantinople had been heard. And as for Byzantium, the name by which the place had formerly been known, it never was a see of any note or

consideration. In regard to the Romans, however uncertain it may be who it was that first preached the gospel to them, and founded a church among them, there can be no doubt of the antiquity of this event, since Paul, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, on his first coming prisoner to Rome, found a church there already planted; and since, in one of his longest letters, manifestly written some time before, and directed to that church, he mentions their faith as even, at that early period, celebrated throughout the world. Rome may therefore be justly reckoned nearly coeval with the oldest Gentile churches. Certain it is, that the tradition which prevailed most concerning this church, in the days of Constantine, and for a considerable time before, was, that it had been founded by the two apostles, Peter and Paul. These were considered as the most eminent in the apostolical college, the one as the doctor of the Jews, the other of the Gentiles; the people, therefore, seemed to think, that it was an honour due to the mistress and capital of the world, to believe, that she had had a principal share in the ministry of both. Here was an original disadvantage that Constantinople, or New Rome, as she was sometimes called, laboured under, which it was impossible for her ever to surmount. Antiquity has great influence on every human establishment, but especially on those of a religious nature. What advantage Old Rome derived hence, when she found it convenient in supporting her claims, to change her ground, as it were, and rear the fabric of spiritual despotism, not as formerly, on the dignity of the world's metropolis and human constitutions, but on divine right, transmitted through the prince of the apostles, is too well known to need a particular illustration. And though the younger sister soon learnt to imitate the elder, and claim an origin and antiquity nearly equal, pretending, on I know not what grounds, to have been founded by the apostle Andrew, the brother of Peter, thought to be the elder brother, and who was certainly, as we learn from John's gospel [a], a disciple of Christ before him; yet the notorious recency, the suddenness, and the too manifest source of her splendour and power, rendered it impracticable for her, without arrogance, ever to vie with the elder sister in her high pretensions.

[a] John i. 41—43.

But with the two causes above mentioned, namely, the superior dignity of the city of Rome, and the opulence of her church, there were several others which co-operated in raising her to that amazing greatness and authority, at which, in the course of a few centuries, she arrived. To enumerate all would be impossible. I shall therefore only select a few of the principal of them.

The first I shall take notice of is, the vigilant and unremitted policy she early showed in improving every advantage for her own aggrandizement, which rank and wealth could bestow. Scarcely had Christianity received the sanction of the legislature, erecting it into a sort of political establishment, before the bishops of this high-minded city began to entertain the towering thoughts of erecting for themselves a new sort of monarchy, a spiritual domination over their brethren, the members of the church, which might in time be rendered universal, analogous to the secular authority lodged in the emperors over the subjects of the empire. The distinctions already introduced, of presbyter, bishop, primate, and (which soon followed) patriarch, seemed naturally to pave the way for it. These distinctions, too, having taken their origin from the civil distinctions that obtained in regard to the villages, towns, and cities, that were the seats of these different orders, seemed to furnish a plausible argument from analogy, that the bishop of the capital of the whole should have an ascendant over the exarchs of the civil dioceses into which it was divided, similar to that which every exarch enjoyed over the metropolitans of the provinces within his diocese, or exarchate, and which every metropolitan exercised over his suffragans, the bishops of his province, and similar to that which the emperor himself exercised over all the members of the empire. Yet, by Constantine's establishment, the bishop of Rome, in strictness, was not so much as an exarch; the civil diocese of Italy having been, on account of its greater populousness and opulence, divided into two parts, called vicariates, or vicarages; the vicariate of Rome, containing ten provinces, and including the islands, Sicily, Corsica, and Sardinia, under the bishop of Rome; and the vicariate of Italy, containing seven provinces, under the bishop of Milan. In deference, however, to a name which was become so venerable as that of

Rome, the precedency, or, as it was also called, the primacy, of its pastor, seems to have been very early, and very generally, admitted in the church. But that for some ages nothing further was admitted, would have been at this day universally acknowledged an indisputable historical fact, had not many learned and indefatigable writers found it their interest to exert all their abilities to perplex and darken it. It was difficult, however, for wealth and splendour, the genuine parents of ambition, to rest satisfied with so trifling a pre-eminence.

Besides, many fortunate incidents, as the minions of Rome no doubt thought them, contributed greatly to assist and forward her ambitious schemes. The council of Sardica, about the middle of the fourth century, at the time that the Arian controversy inflamed and divided the whole Christian community, (this council, I say,) after the oriental bishops were withdrawn, was, by Osius, bishop of Cordoua, a zealous defender of Athanasius, and a firm friend of Julius, bishop of Rome, who was on the same side with him in the great controversy, then agitated with such furious zeal, was induced to make a canon, ordering, that if any bishop should think himself unjustly condemned by his comprovincials and metropolitan, his judges should acquaint the bishop of Rome, who might either confirm their judgment, or order the cause to be re-examined by some of the neighbouring bishops. In this, Osius had evidently a double view. One view was, to confer an honour on his friend Julius, the other, to give an additional security to the clergy of his own side. In those times of violence and party rage, bishops who, on the controverted points, happened to be of a different side from their colleagues in the same province, and especially from the primate, were sometimes, for no other reason, very tumultuously and irregularly deposed. A revisal of this kind seemed then, at least, to secure the final determination in favour of the orthodox, (an epithet which, in church-history, commonly expresses a concurrence in opinion with the majority,) whose doctrine was at that time vigorously supported by the Pope. This end, however, though probably the principal, it does not appear to have answered. The eastern bishops paid no regard to the acts of a synod, from which they thought they had the justest reasons to separate themselves. Nor was it ever accounted, by

the African bishops, of authority sufficient for establishing a custom so totally repugnant to ancient practice, and so subversive of the standing discipline of the church.

But the popes, long after these disputes were terminated, well knew how to avail themselves of a canon so favourable to the exaltation of their see. Not many years afterwards, Valentinian, the more effectually and speedily to crush the dissensions and schisms that obtained, in his time, among the prelates, especially in Italy, and the West, enacted a law, empowering the bishop of Rome to examine and judge other bishops, that religious and ecclesiastical disputes might not be decided by profane and secular judges, but by a Christian pontiff and his colleagues. For this immunity, and the power thus conferred on the order, a considerable number of bishops, mostly indeed Italian, soon after synodically convened at Rome, expressed a grateful sense of the emperor's generosity and indulgence. The opinion, that the order had a superior, even a divine right, to be independent of the civil powers,—a notion so prevalent some ages afterwards,—had not yet been broached. The single agreeable circumstance, that the imperial edict gave an exemption to the clergy from the power of laymen, made them overlook a very fatal circumstance in it, which was, its tendency to enslave the whole order, (not to say the Christian community,) by subjecting them to the tyranny of one of their own number. But the bitter was surmounted by the sweet, or, more properly, the poison was greedily swallowed, as it was hidden under a vehicle extremely palatable. But no advantage, once obtained, was ever overlooked by that politic and watchful power.

It is evident, that neither the canon of Sardica, nor the imperial rescript, produced at first much effect beyond Italy, and its immediate dependencies. For a long time, no regard was paid in the East, or even in Africa, to these new regulations. And their influence over the clergy in the West, it must be owned, advanced by very slow degrees. The subordination of bishops to their own metropolitan, along with the other comprovincial bishops, and of metropolitans to their own exarch, with the other diocesan prelates, had by this time been so well established, that it was no easy matter to remove foundations so

firmly laid. Indeed, about thirty-four years afterwards, in the pontificate of Damasus, the primitive order was expressly restored, and the canon of Sardica virtually revoked by a council assembled at Constantinople, greatly more numerous, and held for many ages in much higher estimation, than the council of Sardica.

One thing, however, in the policy of Rome, to which they sacredly adhered, was never to lose sight of any privilege or advantage once obtained; never to be disheartened at any particular check, or present want of success, in asserting a right, but carefully to watch their opportunity, and anew to urge a plea that appeared favourable to their pretensions, however often they had been baffled in urging it before. This perseverance never failed, on some occasion or other, to be of use to their cause. And one instance of success (the increase of the ignorance and superstition of the people keeping pace with the superiority of the Roman pontiffs) did them more service, than twenty defeats did them hurt.

To this unabated perseverance, they added another maxim, namely, to make the raising of the papal power their primary object, to which it behoved every other consideration to give way. As this showed itself on numberless occasions, so on none more eminently than on the difference which arose betwixt the eastern churches and the western, on the subject of Acacius. This Constantinopolitan pontiff, who lived towards the end of the fifth century, had, in some of those absurd and unintelligible logomachies, with which the Christian world, in those ages, was without intermission pestered, taken the side opposite to that espoused by the Roman pontiff. The consequence was, they first disputed, and, by a very usual progress, from disputing they came to quarrelling, and from quarrelling to an open breach. These holy priests, at last, most piously, according to the fashion of the times, abused, cursed, and excommunicated each other. The Roman bishop, indeed, at this time, made a bold attempt for surpassing all that his predecessors had enterprised hitherto. He summoned before himself, and a synod of Italian bishops, who were his dependants, and, on non-appearance, tried, condemned, and deposed, a patriarch, nay, the first patriarch of the East, an order over which even

the insatiable ambition of that restless power had never, till then, dared to claim any jurisdiction. The reciprocal anathemas followed of course. This produced a most memorable schism between the oriental churches, and the occidental—a schism which continued for no less than five-and-thirty years, and subsisted through no fewer than five successive pontificates. The seeds of the dissension may be said to have been sown in the time of Pope Simplicius. It was by his successor, Felix the Second, that the patriarch was cited, judged, and deposed.

Though it was impossible that such extravagant proceedings should take effect, in opposition to the emperor, and all the oriental churches, they showed but too clearly to what height of pride and arrogance the boundless and ill-judged profusion of former emperors, senators, matrons, and opulent cities, had already raised this novel but formidable power. On this there ensued immediately a division of the church into two: the west adhering to the pope, and the east declaring for the patriarch, both obstinately refusing to communicate with each other. It was but too visible, by the sophistical evasions and subterfuges which the Roman pontiff, and his immediate successor, employed in the manifestoes published to apologise to the world for this conduct, that they began to be apprehensive lest the papal power had been stretched too far, and beyond what the world was yet prepared to bear. For this reason, they were fain to vindicate it on principles, which the see of Rome has now, for several ages, absolutely disclaimed. But what was to be done? They had gone too far to retreat, without giving a mortal wound to all their high pretensions. And to persist, had the appearance of entailing a perpetual schism on the church. This last effect, however, was, on many accounts, rather to be hazarded. Their maxim seems to have been, Better be absolute despots in a narrower territory, than have, in an extensive empire, an authority not only more limited, but co-ordinate, with that of other potentates.

It was a practice in the churches, at that time, and had been for some ages before, to enrol the names of those who died in the communion of the church, in certain records, which they called diptychs, wherein the bishops were registered by themselves. And of these, public commemoration was made, by the

officiating deacon, at a certain part of the service. After the death of Acacius, repeated attempts, both in Felix's lifetime, and after his death, in the time of his successors, were made on the part of the Greeks, to restore the amity that had formerly subsisted between Greeks and Latins. And, in effect, the whole ground of the quarrel, the henaticon, or decree of union; a compromise by observing silence on some disputed points; the objections against the synod of Chalcedon, and against the doctrine contained in a letter of Pope Leo, on the controverted articles; were given up. The only thing that served to obstruct the proposed union, was, that the names of Acacius, and the bishops who succeeded him, during the continuance of the schism, were, in the oriental churches, still retained and read in the diptychs.

This, though it did not in the least affect the doctrine in debate, affected, what more nearly touched Rome, the supremacy she aspired at over all other churches. Whilst the names of those prelates continued there, they were acknowledged as lawful bishops, notwithstanding that they had all been either deposed by the Roman pontiff, or at least refused his communion. And though nothing could be a more barefaced usurpation than the power then, for the first time, arrogated by the pope, it was, after repeated trials, found impossible to obtain reconciliation on any other terms. This obstinacy, or, if ye will, firmness in the pontiff, will appear the more remarkable, when the other circumstances of the case are attended to. The Constantinopolitans were so attached to the memory of Acacius, that, for many years, no successor could permit his name to be erased, without endangering not only his own life, but the tranquillity both of the city, and of a great part of the empire. The emperors, themselves, long considered it as too hazardous a thing even for them to authorise. Besides, the East was at this time divided into two great factions, the eutychians and the orthodox. It gave the former no small subject of triumph, and no little advantage over the latter, their antagonists, that these, whilst the variance subsisted, could reap no benefit or assistance from the western churches, though of the same sentiments, in the profound disputes of the time, with themselves. It was in vain for the Greeks to urge the impossibility of a compliance, without rais-

ing a combustion in the then capital of the empire. It was in vain to urge, that the continuance of the breach would endanger the total subversion of orthodoxy in the East, that is, throughout the better half of Christendom. The pope remained inflexible.

The truth is, these arguments served rather to confirm him in the resolution he had taken, than to induce him to relinquish it. The more difficult the accomplishment of the condition was, on the part of the orientals, the more complete would be the victory of Rome. In like manner, the greater the clamour and the disturbances it might raise in the imperial city, and other Grecian churches, the more signal would be both the triumph of the Latins, and the mortification of the Greeks; and the less, in time to come, would the latter be disposed to hazard a breach with the former. And as to the arguments from the imminent dangers to which the orthodox faith, in the east, would be exposed by the continuance of this unnatural division, nothing can be plainer, than that this very circumstance hardened the obstinacy of the pontiff into downright inflexibility. He saw but too well the necessity the Greeks were under of obtaining peace on any terms, that they might be able to withstand and surmount so formidable a faction as that of the Eutychians, sprung up in the heart of their own country, and daily gathering strength from the divisions of the orthodox.

But, may one say, is it possible that the Romans should, from such selfish and political considerations, have made so small account of endangering, throughout the half of the Christian world, what they reckoned the purity of the faith, and absolutely necessary to salvation? That in reality they acted this part, is an historical fact incontrovertible. So far from abating of their terms, as the danger of the faith increased, they, on the contrary, raised their demands, in the persuasion that the Greeks, from the urgency of the necessity, would be disposed to yield them every thing. In fact, by this artful management, more was obtained at last than had at first been insisted on.

To one who reads the history of the church with attention and understanding, nothing can be more manifest, than that, with the Romans, power was uniformly the primary object, doctrine was always but the secondary. Their great political talents and

address were constantly exerted in modelling and employing the latter in such a manner as to render it instrumental in promoting the former. This cannot, with equal truth, be affirmed of the Greeks. The many philosophic sects which had arisen among them, when in a state of paganism, had produced the pestilent itch of disputation, together with that species of subtlety, which enables those possessed of this miserable cacoethes, to find, on every subject, materials for gratifying it. Such were the disposition and habits, which, on their conversion to Christianity, they brought with them into the new religion; every doctrine of which was, by this frivolous, though ingenious, inquisitive, loquacious, and disputatious people, most unnaturally perverted into matter of metaphysical discussion. Hence sprang those numerous sects, into which the Christian community was so early divided.

It deserves our notice, that, for several ages, all the controversies, almost without exception, originated among the Greeks. I use the term Greeks in the same latitude wherein it is generally used, in ecclesiastic history, for the oriental churches which spoke the Greek language, as contradistinguished to the occidental, which spoke the Latin. Almost the only exception to the remark I have made is the Pelagian heresy, which doubtless arose in the west. The origin of the African sect of the Donatists was more properly a difference, in regard to discipline, than in the explanation of any article of faith. It may also deserve our notice, that though the Jewish state, from the time of Moses, had subsisted for many centuries, in very different situations, and under different forms of government, yea, and in different countries, there were no traces of different sects, or of any theological disputes among them, till after the Macedonian conquests, when they became acquainted with the Grecians.

But some remarks on the origin, the nature, and the consequences of the controversies, that arose in the church, and on the methods that were taken to terminate them by diocesan synods, and ecumenical councils, which constitute a most essential part of ecclesiastical history, and therefore require to be treated more particularly, shall be reserved for a separate discourse.

LECTURE XIV.

The subject of the present lecture is remarks on the origin, the nature, and the consequences of the controversies that, in the early ages, arose in the church, and on the methods that were taken to terminate them by diocesan synods, and ecumenical councils. Though this may, at first sight, appear a digression from the examination of the Roman policy, exercised in raising the wonderful fabric of spiritual tyranny; yet, on a nearer view, it will be found to be intimately connected with that policy, insomuch, that the progress of the latter is, without a competent knowledge of the former, scarcely intelligible.

I observed, in my last prelection, that, for several centuries, almost all our theological disputes originated among the Greeks; that to this sort of exercitation their national character, their education, and early habits, conspired to inure them. They spoke a language which was both copious and ductile to an amazing degree. Let me add, that the people in general, especially since they had been brought under a foreign yoke, were become extremely adulatory in their manner of address, abounding in titles and complimental appellations. To this their native speech may be said, in some respect, to have contributed, by the facility wherewith it supplied them with compound epithets, suited to almost every possible occasion, and expressive of almost every possible combination of circumstances.—This peculiarity, in the genius of their tongue, gratified also their taste both for variety and for novelty; for they were thereby enabled to form new compositions from words in use, almost without end; and when they formed them analogically, were not liable to the charge of barbarism.

Hence sprang up the many flattering titles they gave to their saints and clergy, ἱερομάρτυρ, ἱερόψυχος, τρισάγιος, τρισμακάριστος, τρισμακάριστος, τρισευγενὴς, ἀξιομακάριστος, θεόφιλος, θεοφόρος, θεοδίδακτος, θεοπρεπέστατος, θεομακαριστότατος, χριστόφιλος, χριστοφόρος, χριστοκήρυκος, and a thousand others.

The same mode of adulation they introduced into their public worship; for though no terms can exceed, or even equal. the majesty and perfections of the Supreme Being, the practice of loading their addresses with such epithets, betrayed but too evidently their tendency to think God such a one as themselves, to be gained by fair speeches and pompous titles: for it is a common and just observation, that they are the greatest flatterers who love most to be flattered. An exuberance of inadequate and vain words does but injure the simplicity and the dignity of worship. In their explanation of the mysteries, as they were called, and in their encomiums on the saints, they abounded in such terms, and were ever exercising their invention in coining new ones.

The genius of the Latin tongue, on the contrary, did not admit this freedom; nor had the people, who spoke it, to do them justice, so much levity and vanity as to give them the like propension. What they afterwards contracted of this disposition, they derived solely from their intercourse with the Greeks, and the translation of their writings. Indeed, in their versions from the Greek, as the translator was often obliged, in order to express in Latin such compound epithets, to recur either to circumlocution, or to some composition which the analogy of the language could hardly bear, those things appeared awkward and stiff in a Latin dress, which, in a Grecian habit, moved easily and agreeably.

Now, several of the early disputes, it may be remarked, took their rise from the affectation of employing these high-sounding titles. Hence, in a great measure, the noise that was raised about the terms ὁμοούσιος, ὁμοιούσιος, ὑπόστασις, ὑποστατικός, θεοτόκος, χριστοτόκος, when first introduced into their theology. To these terms, the Latins had no single words properly corresponding. Augustin, one of the most eminent of the Latin fathers, seems to have been so sensible of this defect in discoursing on the Trinity, (L. v. c. 9.) that he apologizes for his language, and considers the expressions he employs, as only preferable to a total silence on the subject, but not as equally adapted with the Greek. "Dictum est," says he, "tres personæ, non ut illud "diceretur, sed ne taceretur." The truth is, so little do the Greek terms, and the Latin, on this subject correspond, that if

you regard the ordinary significations of the words, (and I know not whence else we should get a meaning to them,) the doctrine of the East was one, and that of the West was another, on this article. In the East, it was *one essence and three substances*, μια ουσια, τρεις ὑποστασεις, in the West, it was *one substance and three persons*, "una substantia, tres personæ." The phrases τρια προσωπα, in Greek, *tres substantiæ*, in Latin, would both, I imagine, have been exposed to the charge of *tritheism*. But which of the two, the Greek or the Latin phraseology, was most suited to the truth of the case, is a question I will not take upon me to determine. I shall only say of Augustin's apology, that it is a very odd one, and seems to imply, that on subjects above our comprehension, and to which all human elocution is inadequate, it is better to speak nonsense than be silent. It were to be wished, that on topics so sublime, men had thought proper to confine themselves to the simple but majestic diction of the sacred scriptures.

It was, then, the extravagant humour of these fanciful and prating Orientals, assisted by their native idiom, which produced many of the newfangled and questionable terms I have been speaking of; the terms produced the controversies; and these, in return, gave such consequence to the terms that gave them birth, and created so violent an attachment in the party that favoured them, that people could not persuade themselves that it was possible that the doctrine of the gospel should subsist, and be understood or conveyed by any body without them. Men never seemed to reflect, that the gospel had been both better taught and better understood, as well as better practised, long before this fantastic dress, borrowed from the schools of the sophists, was devised and adapted to it. However, the consequence which these disputes gave to the Greek terms, occasioned an imitation of them in the less pliant language of the Occidentals. Hence these barbarisms, or at least, unclassic words, in Latin, *essentialis, substantialis, consubstantialis, Christipara, Deipara*, and several others of the same stamp, to be found in the writings of the ecclesiastic authors of the fifth and following centuries. All those subtle questions, which so long distracted and disgraced the church, would then, we may well believe, both from the character of the people, and from the genius of the

tongue, much more readily originate, as history informs us that they did, among the Greeks than among the Latins. Indeed the latter were often slower than we should have expected in coming into the dispute. For this we may justly assign, as one principal reason, the general ignorance of the Latins at that time. Letters had, long before Constantine, been in their decline at Rome; insomuch, that at the period I allude to, when those controversies were most hotly agitated, the greater part, even of men in respectable stations, understood no tongue but their own. If they had studied any other, doubtless it would have been Greek, which was become the language of the imperial court, now at Constantinople; and not only of Greece itself, but of almost all the east, particularly of all the men of rank and letters in Asia, Syria, and Egypt. And if even Greek was little understood at Rome, we may safely conclude, that other languages were hardly known at all.

Yet that it was very little known in the fifth century, in the time of Pope Celestine, when the controversy betwixt Cyril and Nestorius broke out, is evident from this single circumstance: When Nestorius wrote to the Pope, sending him an account of the contest, together with a copy of his homilies, containing his doctrine on the point in question, all in Greek, his mother tongue; not only was the pontiff himself ignorant of that language, but it would seem, all the Roman clergy, consisting of many hundreds, knew no more of it than he. And, though we cannot suppose, that there were not then many in Rome who understood Greek, yet there seem to have been none of that consideration, that the Pope could decently employ them in a business of so great consequence. Accordingly, he was obliged to send the whole writings to Cassian, a man of learning, a native of Thrace, who then resided at Marseilles in Gaul, to be translated by him into Latin. This delay gave Cyril no small advantage; for though he wrote to the Pope after Nestorius, yet knowing better, it would seem, the low state of literature at that time in Rome, he prudently employed the Latin tongue, in giving his representation of the affair; and, in this way, produced a prepossession in the mind of the pontiff, which it was impossible for Nestorius afterwards to remove.

Perhaps, too, it may have contributed to make the Latins

less disposed, at first, to enter with warmth into the controversies which sprang up, that the terms whereby the Greek words, on both sides of the question, were latinized, rather than translated, appeared so uncouth and barbarous, that they had little inclination to adopt them. But when time had familiarized their ears to them, we find they could enter into the subject as passionately as the Greeks.

When controversies once were started, the natural vanity of the disputants, together with the conceived importance of the subject, as relating to religion, (an importance which every one, in proportion to the resentment contracted from the contradiction he had met with, was disposed to magnify,) inflamed their zeal, and raised a violence in the parties which the world had never witnessed before. In whatever corner of Christendom the controversy originated, the flame came by degrees to spread throughout the whole, so that the Latin as well as the Greek churches never failed, sooner or later, to be involved in the dispute. As the former, however, for the reasons above-mentioned, came almost always last into the contest, they had previous opportunity of knowing both on what side those who, for learning, parts, and piety, had attained the highest reputation, declared themselves, and to what side the people generally swayed. With these advantages, the Latins, though less intelligent in philological and metaphysical disputes, yet being more united among themselves, a consequence, in a great measure, of their ignorance, which made them more implicit followers, (these I say) when they did declare in favour of a side, commonly, by their number, decided the question, thereby ascertaining what was orthodox, and what was not.

It may also account in part for their greater unanimity, that they had fewer leaders. There were several eminent sees in the east, which were a sort of rivals to one another, for not to mention the exarchal sees of Ephesus and Cæsarea, there were the patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople, each considerable enough to be a check upon the rest. In the west, there was no see whatever that could cope with Rome. But it must be owned, that there was not only a closer union, but in general, more steadiness, among the Latins, than among their rivals, the Greeks. This may be accounted for partly

from the same causes, partly from the difference of national character. The Romans were as remarkable for their gravity, as the Greeks for their levity. Indeed, the Roman pontiffs, who were the chief leaders in the west, did not often renounce a cause, in favour of which they had once declared themselves. I say they did not often; for that they acted this part sometimes, is unquestionable. However far, therefore, this argument may go, in support of the policy of Rome, it cannot be urged in support of her infallibility, as it admits several glaring exceptions. Nothing is more notorious than Rome's desertion of the side which she had long maintained, on the ridiculous question about the three chapters: in regard to which, Pope Vigilius, as is observed by Maimburg [a], shifted sides no fewer than four times. It is well known, that Pope Honorius was, after his death, by a council holden at Constantinople, towards the end of the seventh century, commonly called the sixth general council, condemned as a heretic, and an organ of the devil, for holding the doctrine of the Monothelites. To this judgment the then reigning Pope Agatho consented, not only by his legates, but by the reception and approbation he gave to the decrees of that assembly. Also Leo II. Agatho's successor, declared his concurrence in the anathema pronounced by the council against Pope Honorius.

Were it necessary to produce an instance of change in the same pontiff, beside Vigilius above-mentioned, Liberius furnishes a most apposite example. This pope, about the middle of the fourth century, when the Arian controversy was at its heighth, intimidated by the power of the reigning emperor Constantius, whom he knew to be a zealous disciple of Arius, declared publicly in favour of that party, and excommunicated Athanasius, whom all the orthodox regarded as the patron and defender of the catholic cause. This sentence he soon after revoked, and after revoking it, his legates, at the council of Arles, overawed by the emperor, concurred with the rest in signing the condemnation of Athanasius, yielding, as they expressed it, to the troublesome times. Afterwards, indeed, Liberius was so far a confessor in the cause of orthodoxy, that he underwent a long and severe banishment, rather than lend his aid and

[a] Traité Historique de l'Eglise de Rome, chap. vii.

countenance to the measures which the emperor pursued for establishing Arianism throughout the empire. But however firm and undaunted the pope appeared for a time, he had not the magnanimity to persevere, but was at length, in order to recover his freedom, his country, and his bishopric, induced to retract his retractation, to sign a second time the condemnation of Athanasius, and to embrace the Arian symbol of Sirmium. Not satisfied with this, he even wrote to the Arian bishops of the east, excusing his former defence of Athanasius, imputing it to an excessive regard for the sentiments of his predecessor Julius; and declaring, that now, since it had pleased God to open his eyes, and show him how justly the heretic Athanasius had been condemned, he separated himself from his communion, and cordially joined their holinesses, (so he styled the Arian bishops) in supporting the true faith. Before he returned from exile, meeting with the emperor, who was by this time turned semiarian, the pliant pontiff, impatient to be again in possession of his see, was induced to change anew, and subscribe the semiarian confession.

This apostacy of Liberius, which has given infinite plague to the prostitute pens employed in support of papal usurpations, whose venal talents are ever ready for the dirty work of defending every absurdity, that can gratify the views of their superiors, this, which in their hands has proved a copious source of sophistry, chicane, and nonesense, whilst, as Bower well expresses it, like men struggling for life in deep water, and catching at every twig, they flounce in vain from quibble to quibble, and from one subterfuge to another; this apostacy, I say, was acknowledged and lamented by all the contemporary fathers, who take occasion to mention these transactions, even by those who have since been canonized, and are, at this day, worshipped in the Romish church, as saints of the first magnitude. A plain proof, that the plea of infallibility had not then been heard of. Jerom, Athanasius, Hilarius, all in one voice, accuse this pope of giving the sanction of his name to heresy. The last of these, St. Hilarius, cannot refrain, when he mentions him, from anathematizing him, and all his perfidious adherents. All the ancient historians concur, in like manner, in attesting, that he apostatized from the faith.

Moreover, the same Liberius afterwards admitted to his communion, being, probably, ignorant of their sentiments, the Macedonians, who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Last of all, after the death of the Arian emperor, and the accession of Julian, commonly called the apostate, who, though not a Christian, professed to be a friend to toleration, the venerable, the infallible head of the church universal, as the partizans of Rome now denominate their pontiff, made one change more, and returned to orthodoxy.

To give but one instance more, Pope John XXII. in two sermons, (for even so low as the fourteenth century, popes sometimes preached) maintained that the saints departed are not admitted to the beatific vision till after the resurrection. This doctrine gave great and general offence. One Wallis, an Englishman, was the first who ventured to preach publicly against it. This he did in Avignon itself, where the pope then resided. Wallis, for his uncommon audacity, was thrown into prison, and condemned to live on bread and water. Afterwards the question was canvassed by several theologians of character, particularly by those of the university of Paris, with all the bishops and abbots then in that metropolis, and also by a synod assembled at Vincennes, who unanimously condemned the pope's opinion as repugnant to scripture, and heretical. Philip, the sixth king of France, sent the pontiff an authentic copy of this decision, signed by twenty-six eminent divines, requiring his holiness to acquiesce in their judgment, and (if cardinal d'Ailly may be credited) threatening, that in case he did not, he would cause him to be burned for heresy. The pope at first attempted to vindicate his doctrine, but finding, soon after, that the dissatisfaction, and even scandal, which it had given, were almost universal, he was induced to declare, in a public consistory, that he never intended to support any tenet contrary to the scriptures and the catholic faith; but that if he had inadvertently dropt any such thing in his sermons, he retracted it. This, though not an acknowledgment of his error, was a plain acknowledgment of his fallibility. In his last illness, however, a few hours before his death, he made a public and solemn retractation of his erroneous doctrine, in presence of all the cardinals and bishops then at Avignon, called together on purpose,

declaring, that the saints departed were admitted to the sight of God's essence, (such was the jargon of the time) as soon as they were purged from their sins; and retracting whatever he had said, preached, or written to the contrary. His successor, Benedict XII. that his own orthodoxy might not be suspected, took an early opportunity of preaching on the beatific vision, and, in his sermon, showed his sentiments to be the reverse of those which had given so much scandal in his predecessor. Not satisfied with this, he caused the point to be discussed in a consistory, to which he invited all who had adopted Pope John's opinion, that they might produce what they had to offer in its defence. Afterwards he published a constitution, wherein, without naming his predecessor, he expressly condemned his doctrine, commanding all to be prosecuted as heretics, who should thenceforth obstinately maintain or teach it. I might produce another instance from the same Pope John, who maintained, in a decretal, that the Franciscan friars had property, in direct contradiction to the decretal of his predecessor Nicolas IV. affirming, with other popes, that they had none, and was not less zealous for the side he took in this profound controversy than if the whole of Christianity had depended on it; commanding the inquisitors to extirpate, by all possible means, the contrary, pestilential, erroneous, heretical, and blasphemous doctrine.

But to return to our subject, it is certain that the bishops of Rome cannot be accused of having often acted so weak a part as Pope Liberius, Pope Vigilius, or Pope John. Besides, the case of the first, and that of the church, in his time, were particular. Heterodoxy had then a powerful and bigotted prince for its protector, who stuck at no means by which he could accomplish the extirpation of the faith of Nice, and the establishment of Arianism in every part of his dominions; and, in fact, what with persuasion, what with compulsion, the defection was become universal, insomuch, that before the death of that violent antitrinitarian persecutor, there was, in the whole church, but one orthodox bishop who kept possession of his see, Gregory of Elvira, in Andalusia. However justly, therefore, the versatility of Liberius may be considered as totally subversive of the plea of infallibility, it does not invalidate what has been said in regard to the profound policy and address generally

maintained by that watchful power. The case of Vigilius was, in some respects, similar.

We have seen with what steadiness, and at how great a risk, the re-union of the eastern church and the western was so effected as to give a very considerable ascendancy to the latter, which she had never enjoyed before. The manner of conducting the measure did but too manifestly show, that it was a matter of no consequence to her, whether the Greeks were orthodox or heterodox, whilst they continued independent of her authority, and did not dread her displeasure. These, at least the greater part of their doctors, were a race of quibbling sophists, engrossed with the imaginary importance of their unintelligible speculations, and futile disquisitions, who did not conceive a nobler object of their pursuit, than that their particular explanations and phraseology should be adopted into the system and language of the church.

Though the Greeks, taken together, were, in all literary matters, an overmatch for the Latins, yet, as the latter kept pretty close united, whilst the former were split into parties, eternally disputing and squabbling, the Latins derived hence an inconceivable advantage. For however much the Greeks in general affected to despise them as rude and illiterate, compared with themselves, no sooner did they take a side in any controversy, than they were sure to gain over that party of the Greeks whose side they took: the general rivalship between Greeks and Latins was swallowed up in the love of victory, so natural to professed combatants, and in the particular emulation that each entertained against a hated antagonist in the controversy. Though both nations were greatly degenerated from what they had been in the Augustan age, the vestiges of their original and respective national characters, as described by the prince of Latin poets, were still discernible:

Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra:
Credo equidem: vivos ducent de marmore vultus:
Orabunt causas melius: cœlique meatus
Describent radio, et surgentia sidera dicent.
Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento,
(Hæ tibi erunt artes) pacisque imponere morem;
Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos. ÆN. L. 6.

That the Romans, by their valour, their public virtue, and their immense superiority in the art of war, should have raised an empire over the undisciplined surrounding nations, who were all, except the Greeks, so much their inferiors in every thing but animal courage and brute force, is not so very astonishing, as to a careless eye it may at first appear. But that, after their extraordinary success had enriched them with the spoils of all nations; after their riches had introduced luxury, effeminacy, and indolence; after they had, by their vices, become, in their turn, a prey to the barbarians they had formerly subdued; after the empire came to be torn to pieces by Goths, Vandals, Huns, and Lombards; when the sun of science was now set, and the night of ignorance, superstition, and barbarism, was fast advancing; that out of the ruins of every thing great and venerable, there should spring a new species of despotism, never heard of, or imagined before, whose means of conquest and defence were neither swords nor spears, fortifications nor warlike engines, but definitions and canons, sophisms and imprecations; and that by such weapons, as by a kind of magic, there should actually be reared a second universal monarchy, the most formidable the world ever knew,—will, to latest ages, afford matter of astonishment to every judicious inquirer.

Of the numerous controversies wherewith the church was, for several ages, pestered, some related only to things ceremonial. Of this sort was the contention about the time of the observance of Easter, which, so early as the second century, raised a flame in the church. Others, doubtless, concerned essential articles in the Christian theology. Such were the Arian controversy and the Pelagian. Whether Jesus Christ was a divine person, and existed from eternity, or a mere creature, and had a beginning; whether by grace, in scripture, we are to understand advantages with regard to us properly external, such as the remission of sins, the revelation of God's will by his Son, the benefit of the examples of Christ and his apostles, the promises of the gospel, and the gifts of Providence; or whether we ought also to comprehend, under that name, as things equally real, certain internal benefits conferred on the mind by the invisible operation of the Holy Spirit; are momentous questions, which nearly affect the substance of Christian doctrine.

But from this fund many other questions may, by men more curious than wise, be easily started, which no modest man will think himself capable of answering, and no pious man will think it his duty to pry into. Such are some of those that have been moved in regard to the manner of the Spirit's operation, in regard to the generation of the second person of the Trinity, and the procession of the third. To this class may be added, those impertinent inquiries which have sometimes produced as great a ferment as the most momentous would have done. Of this sort is the question concerning the natural corruptibility of the body of Christ, and that about the palpability of the bodies of the saints after the resurrection.

There is a fourth set of questions, which are mere logomachies, in regard to which the different combatants have either no fixed meaning to the words they employ, or mean precisely the same thing under different expressions. In this last case, the controversy is either absolutely nonsensical, or purely verbal. Nor has this been the least fruitful source of contention in the church. What could be a more flagrant example of this than the question which created, in the time of Pope Hormisdas, and some of his successors, so much animosity and strife? The point was, whether we ought to say, "One of the Trinity "suffered in the flesh;" or, "One person of the Trinity suf"fered in the flesh." On this pretty puzzle there were four different opinions. One set approved both expressions; a second condemned both; a third maintained the former expression to be orthodox, the latter heterodox; and a fourth affirmed the reverse. In this squabble, emperors, popes, and patriarchs, engaged with great fury. The then reigning emperor, Justinian, was as mere a dotard on all the sophistical trash then in vogue among the theologians, as any scholastic recluse, who had been inured to wrangling from his cradle, and had nothing else to mind. Luckily, however, no council was convened to discuss the point, and give it sufficient importance. In consequence of this cruel neglect it died away.

The dispute with Nestorius, though equally frivolous, being treated differently, took deeper root. The point in debate at first was, Whether the Virgin Mary might be denominated more properly the mother of God, or the mother of him that is

God? It is plain, that there could not arise a question which might be more justly said to turn merely on grammatical propriety. Both sides admitted that Jesus Christ is God as well as man; both sides admitted, that his human nature was born of the Virgin, and that his divine nature existed from eternity; both sides admitted the distinction between the two natures, and their union in the person of Christ. Where then lay the difference? It could be no where but in phraseology. Yet this notable question raised a conflagration in the church, and proved, in the east, the source of infinite mischief, hatred, violence, and persecution. It is reported of Constantine Copronymus, in the eighth century, that he one day asked the patriarch, "What harm would there be in calling the Virgin Mary the "mother of Christ?" *God preserve your Majesty*, answered the patriarch, with great emotion, *from entertaining such a thought. Do you not see how Nestorius is anathematized for this by the whole church?*—"I only asked for my own information," replied the emperor, "but let it go no farther." A few emphatical strokes like this are enough to make the people of that age appear to those of the present as not many removes from idiocy. Had Nestorius, whose correctness of taste (for opinion is out of the question,) made him sensible of the irreverence of an expression, which seemed greatly to derogate from the divine majesty, and tended manifestly to corrupt the religious sentiments of the vulgar, who are incapable of entering into metaphysical distinctions, been but a better politician, (for to do him justice, Rome herself cannot accuse him of the most unclerical sin of moderation,) and, consequently, had he been a more equal match for his adversary, St. Cyril, the decision of the church had infallibly been the reverse of what it was, and we should at this day find Cyrilianism in the list of heresies, and a St. Nestorius in the calendar of the beatified. On such accidental circumstances it often depended, whether a man should be deemed an heresiarch or a saint, a devil or an angel. "I shall only remark," says a modern Roman Catholic author, (Richard Simon, not Father Simon of the Oratory, *Des Ceremonies et coutumes des Chretiens orientaux*, Ch. 7.) "that some might infer, that Nestorianism is but a nominal "heresy, and that if Nestorius and St. Cyril had understood

"one another, they might have reconciled their opinions, and "prevented a great scandal in the church. But the Greeks "were always keen disputants, and it was by them that most "of the first heresies were broached. Commonly their dis-"putes consisted in a sort of metaphysical chicanery on ambi-"guous phrases. Hence they drew inferences after their man-"ner, and from inferences proceeded to personal abuse, till the "parties at last became irreconcileable enemies. Had they but "coolly explained their thoughts, they would have found, that, "in most cases, there was no scope for the imputation of here-"sy on either side. This is what some allege to have happen-"ed in the affair of Nestorius and St. Cyril."—True, indeed, Mr. Simon, and for a specimen of their spirit and coolness, let us but hear the final judgment of the council of Ephesus in this famous cause. "Our Lord Jesus Christ, against whom the "most wicked Nestorius has levelled his blasphemies, declares "him, by the mouth of this council, deprived of the episcopal "dignity, and cut off from the communion of the episcopal "order." The note bearing this sentence was thus directed: "To Nestorius, a second Judas." In every thing they were guided by Cyril, whom, in respect of meekness, they might, with equal truth, have denominated a second Moses.

Nobody is at a loss to perceive the opinion of the French author above quoted in regard to this affair. Yet we may observe in passing, in what an indirect manner he is obliged to express it. *Some might infer*, and *some allege*. And no wonder that he should take this method of suggesting a principle totally subversive of the doctrine of the infallibility, wheresoever placed; a doctrine which now, among the learned of that communion, seems to be regarded as purely of the exoteric kind, that is, as proper, whether true or false, to be inculcated on the people, as an useful expedient in governing them. This Frenchman's principle plainly subverts the pope's pretensions; for Celestine freely acceded to the sentence, condemning Nestorius as a most pestilent heretic. It subverts the pretensions of an ecumenical council, which that of Ephesus, however disorderly and tumultuous, has always been acknowledged by the Romanists to be. It subverts the pretensions of the church collectively, which did, for many ages, universally (the not very numerous sect of Nes-

torius only excepted) receive the decrees of that synod. This Ephesian council was one of the four, concerning which Pope Gregory, who is also called St. Gregory, and Gregory the Great, declared, that he received them with as much veneration as he did the four gospels.

Yet so little of consistency in speculations of this sort is to be expected from either popes or councils, that when, so late as the pontificate of Clement the eleventh, in the beginning of the present century, some affected to style St. Ann the grandmother of God, (no doubt, with the pious view of conferring an infinite obligation on her) his holiness thought fit to suppress the title, as being, in his judgment, offensive to pious ears. Yet it is impossible for one, without naming Nestorius, to give a clearer decision in his favour. For what is the meaning of *grandmother?* Is it any more than saying, in one word, what *mother's mother*, or *father's mother*, expresses in two? To say then of Ann, that she was the *mother of the mother of God*, which they admit, and to say that she was *God's grandmother*, which they reject, are absolutely the same. The sole spring of offence is in the first step: if that be admitted, the propriety of such expressions, as God's grandmother or grandfather, uncle, aunt, or cousin, follows of course. The second council of Nice, with greater consistency, in quoting the epistle of James, do not hesitate to style the writer *God's brother*. Κατα τον αδελφοθεον Ιακωβον, are their very words. Only from this more recent circumstance, we may warrantably conclude, that if the phrase, *mother of God*, had never been heard till the time of Clement the eleventh, it had fared well with the author, if he had not been pronounced both a blasphemer and a heretic. What made the case of Nestorius the harder was, that he was, in no respect, the innovator. He was only shocked at the innovations in language, if not in sentiments, of the newfangled phrases introduced by others, such as this, *of the mother of God*, and *the eternal God was born; the impassible suffered; the immortal and only true God expired in agonies.* I have seen a small piece, called, if I remember right, "Godly riddles," by the late Mr. Ralph Erskine, one of the apostles and founders of the Scotch secession, written precisely in the same taste. "There is nothing new," says Solomon, "under the sun." In the most distant ages and re-

mote countries, kindred geniuses may be discovered wherein the same follies and absurdities, as well as vices, spring up and flourish. To men of shallow understandings, such theologic paradoxes afford a pleasure not unlike that which is derived from being present at the wonderful feats of jugglers. In these, by mere slight of hand, one appears to do what is impossible to be done; and in those, by mere slight of tongue, (in which the judgment has no part) an appearance of meaning and consistency is given to terms the most self-contradictory, and the incredible seems to be rendered worthy of belief. To set fools a staring, is alike the aim of both. I shall only observe, that of the two kinds of artifice, the juggler's and the sophister's, the former is much the more harmless.

To proceed; the contention that arose soon after, on occasion of the doctrine of Eutyches, appears to have been of the same stamp. The whole difference terminated in this, that the one side maintained, that Christ is *of* two natures, the other, that he is *of* and *in* two natures, both agreeing, that in one person he is perfect God and perfect man. Yet this dispute was, if possible, conducted with more fury and rancour than the former. Much need, in those days, had the rulers of the church, who called themselves the followers and ministers of the meek and humble Jesus, to go and learn what this meaneth, (2 Tim. ii. 14.) *Charge them before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.* They acted, on the contrary, as if they could not conceive another purpose for which a revelation had been given them, but to afford matter of endless wrangling, and to foster all the most malignant passions of human nature. Had they so soon forgotten the many warnings they had received from inspiration, of the mischievous tendency of such a conduct, that profane and vain babblings would increase to more ungodliness, that their pitiful logomachies, their oppositions of science, falsely so called, their foolish and unedifying questions and vain janglings, could only gender strife? Is it possible they could be so blind as not to see their own character, as well as the consequences of their conduct, so distinctly delineated in these words of the apostle: *If any man consent not to wholesome words,* practical and useful instructions, not idle speculations, *even the words of our Lord*

Jesus Christ, and the doctrine that is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doating about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, who think that gain is godliness? Could they read these things and not be struck with so bright a reflection as they exhibited of their own image? We must think, that at that period, these things were but little read, and less minded.

From the fifth century downwards, it became the mode, in all their controversies, to refer to the councils and fathers, in support of their dogmas, and to take as little notice of sacred writ, as if it no way concerned the faith and practice of a Christian. But their despicable and unmeaning quibbles (to say the truth) were not more remote from the doctrine of the gospel, than the methods whereby they supported their dogmas were repugnant to the morals which it inculcates. Let us hear the character given of their councils, their procedure, and the effects produced by them, by a contemporary author, a bishop too, who spoke from knowledge and experience. St. Gregory Nazianzen, writing to Procopius, thus excuses his refusal to attend a synod, at which his presence was expected: "To tell you plainly, I "am determined to fly all conventions of bishops; for I never "yet saw a council that ended happily. Instead of lessening, "they invariably augment the mischief. The passion for vic-"tory, and the lust of power, (you'll perhaps think my freedom "intolerable) are not to be described in words. One present "as a judge will much more readily catch the infection from "others than be able to restrain it in them. For this reason "I must conclude, that the only security of one's peace and "virtue is in retirement." Thus far Nazianzen. How a man, who, in the fifth century, could talk so reasonably, and so much like a Christian, came to be sainted, is, not, indeed, so easily to be accounted for.

On the whole, when one seriously considers the rage of dogmatizing, which, for some ages, like a pestilential contagion, overspread the church; when one impartially examines the greater part of the subjects, about which they contended with so much vehemence, and their manner of conducting the con-

test, especially in those holy convocations, called synods, it is impossible not to entertain a low opinion of their judgment, and abhorrence of their disposition. At the same time, it is but doing them justice to remark, that in cases wherein their imaginations were not heated by controversy and party-spirit, when they kept within their proper sphere, the making of regulations or canons for maintaining order and discipline in the church, they did not often betray a want of judgment and political capacity. On the contrary, they frequently give ground of admiration to the considerate, that the same persons should, in the one character, appear no better than sophisters and quibblers, fanatics and furies, and, in the other, no less than prudent statesmen and wise legislators.

But it is time to return from this digression, if it can be called a digression, about councils, to the policy of Rome, and the means by which she rose to the very pinnacle of worldly prosperity and grandeur. I thought it of consequence to give in passing a slight sketch of the general nature, and rise, and consequences of those disputes, which constitute so essential a part of ecclesiastical history. I shall, in my next, proceed in tracing the causes and maxims which contributed to the establishment of the Roman hierarchy.

LECTURE XV.

In my last discourse, I gave you a general account of the nature, rise, and progress, of those controversies, which continued for many ages to disturb the peace of the church, and which were, in a great measure, the consequence of a defection from the genuine spirit of the gospel, from the primitive simplicity of its doctrine, and purity of its morals, and no less evidently the cause of still greater corruptions, and a more flagrant apostacy, though men still retained the abused name of Christian. I took notice also of the methods taken to terminate those disputes by synods and councils, a remedy which commonly proves worse than the disease; rather, I should say, a prescription of that kind, which, instead of curing, inflames the distemper, and renders it epidemical; nay, is often productive of several others. The very convoking of such numerous assemblies, from all the corners of the empire, for the discussion of such senseless debates, as the greater part of them manifestly were, gave, in the eye of the world, a consequence to their logomachies, and drew an attention to them, which it was impossible they should ever otherwise have acquired. Besides, the sophistry and altercation employed by both parties in the controversy naturally gave birth to new questions, insomuch, that they sprang up faster on every side, than it was in their power to terminate them. What the poets feigned of the hydra was here verified. By lopping off one of the heads of the monster, they gave rise at least to two others. "Reges ignari (says Le Clerc, Ars Crit. p. 2. s. 2. "c. 5,) nec inter bonos principes numerandi, convocarunt Græ-"culos, qui linguæ acuendæ per totam vitam operam dederant, "rerum ipsarum ignaros, contendendi studiosos, perpetuis rixis "inter se divisos; et bardos aliquot homines ex occidente, ru-"diores quidem illis, sed non meliores; iique post pudendas "contentiones, obscurissima quædam dogmata, verbis sæpe pa-"rum aptis, auctoritate sua firmant; quæ stupidi populi sine

"examine adorent, quasi divinitus accepta. Non ficta me loqui "norunt qui synodorum historias legerunt; nec certe vanus "erat qui dixit:

Ουδε τι πω συνοδοισιν ʽομοθρονος εσσομ᾽ εγωγε
Χηνων ʽη γερανων ακριτα μαρναμενων
Ενθ᾽ ερις, ενθα μοθος τε και αισχεα κρυπτα παροιθεν
Εις ʽενα δυσμενεων χωρον αγειρομενα.

"Nunquam ego sedebo in synodis anserum aut gruum temere "pugnantium. Illic contentio, illic rixa, et probra antea laten-"tia sævorum hominum in unum locum collecta." I shall make a supposition, which may at first appear extravagant, but which will, I hope, on examination, be found entirely apposite to the case in hand. Suppose that a single province in the empire had been visited with the pestilence, and that the distemper raged with so much violence that few in that neighbourhood escaped; suppose further, that the ruling powers had, in their great wisdom, determined to summon, from all the provinces infected and uninfected, the whole medical tribe, physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries, sound and diseased indiscriminately, in order to consult together, and fix upon the most effectual method of extirpating the latent poison; would it have been difficult to foresee the consequences of a measure so extraordinary? The diseased in that assembly would quickly communicate the infection to the sound, till the whole convention, without exception, were in the same wretched plight; and when all should be dispersed and sent home again, they would return to their respective countries, breathing disease and death wherever they went; so that the malignant contagion which had, at first, afflicted only a small part, would, by such means, be rendered universal, and those who ought to have assisted in the cure of the people, would have proved the principal instruments of poisoning them. Exactly such a remedy were the decisions of councils, to the plague of wrangling, at that time not less terrible, if its consequences were duly weighed.

What an ecumenical council is, has never yet been properly ascertained. If we are to understand by it an assembly, wherein every individual church is represented, there never yet was such a council, and we may safely predict, never will be. There was so much of independency in the primitive churches,

before the time of Constantine, that at first their provincial and diocesan synods (for they had not then any general councils) claimed no authority over their absent members, or even over those present, who had not consented to the acts of the majority. Thus they were, at first, more properly, meetings for mutual consultation and advice, in what concerned the spiritual conduct of their flocks, than societies vested with legislative powers, even over the members of their own community. In proportion as the metropolitans rose above the suffragans, and the patriarchs above the metropolitans, the provincial synod, in concurrence with the metropolitan, and the diocesan synod, in concurrence with the patriarch, acquired more authority and weight.

But when, after the establishment of Christianity, ecumenical councils, or what, in a looser way of speaking, were called so, were convoked by the emperor, (which continued for ages to be the practice in the church) if the patriarchs, or exarchs themselves, were divided, as each was commonly followed by the bishops of his diocese, there was no one person of weight enough to unite them. Sometimes, indeed, the emperor, when bigotted to a side, interfered in their debates; and when he did, he rarely failed, by some means or other, to procure a determination of the dispute in favour of his opinion. But this, though commonly vindicated by those who were, or who chose to be of the emperor's opinion, was always considered by the losing side as violent and uncanonical, notwithstanding that his right to convene them was allowed on all hands. However, as it never happened, even, in their most numerous councils, that every province, nay, that every civil diocese, or exarchate, I might say, that every Christian nation, had a representation in the assembly, so there was not one of those conventions which could, with strict propriety, be called ecumenical. With those who were not satisfied with their decisions, there were never wanting arguments, not only specious, but solid, against their universality, and, consequently, against their title to an universal submission.

Certain it is, that no party was ever convinced of its errors by the decision of a council. If the church came to an acquiescence, the acquiescence will be found to have been imputable

more to the introduction of the secular arm, that is, of the emperor's authority, who sometimes from principle, sometimes from policy, interposed in church affairs, than to any deference shown to the synodical decree. Accordingly, when the imperial power was exerted in opposition to the council's determination, as was frequently the case, it was, to the full, as effectual in making the council be universally rejected, as, on other occasions, in making it be universally received. I may say further, that this power was equally effectual in convoking councils to establish the reverse of what had been established by former councils. In what passed in relation both to the Arian and to the Eutychian controversies, and afterwards in those regarding the worship of images, these points are, to every intelligent reader, as clear as day.

Indeed, the doctrine of the infallibility of councils is, comparatively, but a novel conceit. Those of the ancients, who paid the greatest deference to their judgment, did not run into this extravagance. What was St. Gregory Nazianzen's opinion of the matter, may be learnt from the quotation I gave you from that author in the preceding prelection. But the futility of recurring to this method for terminating disputes is what the whole Christian world, Greek and Latin, Protestant and Papist, seems now to be sufficiently convinced of, insomuch, that without the spirit of prophecy, one may venture to foretel, that, unless there is a second dotage which the church has yet to undergo, the council of Trent will remain the last under the name of ecumenical, assembled for the purpose of ascertaining articles of faith.

But to return to the steps and maxims by which the papal power arose. I have already mentioned two things very remarkable in the Roman policy; one is the steadiness with which they pursued a measure once adopted; the other, the sacrifice they always made of every other consideration to the advancement of their authority and grandeur. In the controversies that sprang up, I have observed the advantages the Latin church derived from the following circumstances, to wit, that they were commonly later than the Greeks in becoming acquainted with the subject in debate, had much less of a controversial genius, and were more united among themselves.

In many of the disputes, especially the earlier disputes, we cannot say of one of the two opposite tenets more than of the other, that it tended to advance the hierarchy. Several of them, as we have seen, were either mere verbal cavils, or such jumbles of ill-adapted ideas, in the form of propositions, as were quite incomprehensible, and no otherwise connected with practice than in the general, but very strong, tendency they had, to divert men's attention and zeal from what was essential and useful, to what was entirely imaginary and frivolous. Nevertheless in these, however unimportant in themselves, it was of great importance to Rome, for the advancement of her authority, that her explicit declaration on either side should prove decisive of the question. In the latter controversies, indeed, such as those concerning purgatory, image worship, transubstantiation, indulgences, the indelible character, the efficacy of the *opus operatum*, that is, the exterior of the sacramental action, and some others, we may say with truth, that ecclesiastical authority was clearly interested on one side of the question. It would even imply an uncommon degree of stupidity not to discern how much in those questions the victorious side, or that which obtained the sanction of catholicism, tended to exalt the priesthood. But before these controversies came upon the carpet, the power of Rome was so far advanced, that she had not the same occasion as formerly for reserve and caution in making her election. Accordingly her election was invariably on the side which most advanced her power. It is for this reason that the very origin of such doctrines, as well as the methods she employed in supporting them, are not improperly imputed to priestcraft.

In regard to the maxim abovementioned, (which is, indeed, of the essence of priestcraft,) namely, to make every consideration give way to the aggrandizement of her priestly authority, we have already produced one strong evidence of it, in the manner wherein the peace was effected, after what is called the great schism of Acacius, or the first schism of the east. But in nothing does this Roman maxim appear more glaring, than in the encouragement invariably given to those who, from any part of the world, could be induced to appeal to the Roman pontiff. For many centuries, always indeed till the right of

receiving such appeals came by custom to be firmly established, it was the invariable maxim of the Roman court, without paying the smallest regard to the merits of the cause, often without examining it, to decide in favour of the appellant. No maxim could be more unjust. At the same time, for a power which had, by her opulence and arts, and some peculiar advantages, become so formidable, no maxim, ere the practice of appealing to her judgment had taken root, could be more politic, or effectually tend to encourage and establish that practice.

That ye may be satisfied I do not wrong the Romish hierarch, do but examine a little how the case stood in some of the first causes that were in this manner brought before his tribunal. Indeed, in the very first of any note, his holiness was rather unfortunate in following the maxim I have mentioned. The appeal I allude to was that of the heresiarch Pelagius, and his disciple Celestius, from the sentence of an African synod, by which their doctrine had been condemned, and they themselves, and all the teachers and holders of their tenets, had been excommunicated. From this sentence they appealed to Rome. Zozimus, then pope, agreeably to the maxims of his court, immediately, but very unfortunately for himself, declared in their favour, vindicated their doctrine, and, in a letter directed to the African bishops, upbraided these prelates in the strongest terms for the temerity of their procedure, ordered the accusers of Pelagius and Celestius, within two months, to repair to Rome, to make good their charge before him, declaring, that if they did not, he would reverse the sentence which had been pronounced. And as to Heros and Lazarus, who had taken a principal part in the prosecution; men who, if we may credit the testimony of St. Prosper and St. Jerom, (for Rome is in this confronted by her own saints) were eminent for the purity of their lives, as well as for their faith and zeal; the pope, in a summary manner, without so much as giving them a hearing, or assigning them a day for offering what they had to plead in their own defence, deposed and excommunicated them. The steadiness of the Africans, however, co-operating with other causes, at last compelled the pontiff not only to relax, but totally to change his style and conduct. Though neither the bishops, nor Paulinus the accuser, whom the pope had summoned by

name, paid the least regard to his summons, or to his declared intention of having the cause tried anew at Rome, they gave it a re-hearing in another, and a very numerous African synod, convened at Carthage, wherein, without showing any deference to the sentiments of the Roman bishop, they unanimously adhered to their former judgment.

The ardour of the pontiff to favour an appellant did manifestly, in this instance, carry him beyond the bounds of prudence. The condemnation of the Pelagian doctrine had been, in some respect, ratified by his predecessor Innocent. Two African synods and one Numidian synod, assembled at Milevis, had with one voice condemned it. Celestius, after his condemnation in Africa, having taken refuge in Ephesus, was soon driven thence, in consequence of the general odium which his opinions raised, and had afterwards no better treatment in Constantinople, when he thought proper to betake himself thither. Besides, the emperor Honorius, without waiting the judgment of Rome, was induced, by a deputation from the African synod, not only to approve their decrees, but to enact a very severe law against the Pelagians, ordering all that should be convicted of this heresy, to be sent into exile. Add to all this, that the two greatest lights of the Latin church, Jerom and Augustin, whose judgment was of very great weight all over the west, had openly declared against them.

The pontiff therefore discovered, though late, that he had been precipitate, and had (through an excessive attachment to what in the main would be admitted by politicians to be a wise maxim) engaged in a desperate cause, and had so many and powerful enemies to encounter, as the papacy, in so early a period, was not a match for. It was become, therefore, absolutely necessary for him to retreat, lest, by grasping unseasonably at too much, he should lose every thing, and even be deserted by those who, on other occasions, firmly supported him. This he endeavoured to do with the best grace he could; but to do it with a good grace was impossible. Accordingly, he was at length under a necessity to anathematize as impious, what he had formerly, in the most explicit terms, pronounced innocent. In the whole affair, Rome evidently showed the truth of an observation I formerly made, that with her, doctrine was ever but a matter

of secondary consideration, the primary object was invariably power.

The conduct of Zozimus, on the appeal of Apiarius, a presbyter of Sica, in Africa, who had been deposed and excommunicated for several heinous crimes, was very remarkable. The pope, without so much as hearing his adversaries, restored him not only to the communion of the church, but to the rank from which he had been degraded. The vile arts of lying and forgery, which, on this occasion, were employed by the holy see, never weakly scrupulous about means, and the compromise which the African bishops, though not deceived by papal artifices, were, for peace-sake, compelled to make; the second deposition of that irreclaimable profligate, his second appeal to Rome, and his second hasty restoration by Pope Celestine, without hearing his accusers; the methods taken by Rome to patronize and reinstate him, and the defeat of those methods, by the explicit confession, which, in an African synod, the culprit made, of the most atrocious crimes, to the unspeakable confusion of the pope's legate, sent to defend his innocence; all these, I say, furnish a scene, wherein the very arcana of Roman policy may be thoroughly penetrated by the discerning mind. Nothing could more clearly demonstrate, than did the conduct of Rome in the whole transaction, that she paid no more regard to guilt or innocence, in the judgments she pronounced, than she did to truth or falsehood, in the means she employed. With no person or state did the maxim, ascribed by Suetonius to Julius Cæsar, more exactly quadrate than with the see of Rome. "Si violandum est jus, "regnandi gratia violandum est, aliis rebus pietatem colas." With her all was just, and all was true, that promoted the great object, POWER; all was false, and all was criminal, that opposed it. Indeed, the black confession which Apiarius publicly made, of crimes judged too shocking to be recorded, tended to give but a very unfavourable impression of the decisions of a tribunal, since called infallible. For let it be observed, that this man at Rome was twice absolved as guiltless, (both times indeed without a trial) first by Pope Zozimus, then by Pope Celestine, both now worshipped as saints by the Romanists.

It were easy to show, were it proper to descend into more particulars, that the conduct of Leo, on occasion of the appeal

of Celedonius, of Besançon, from the diocesan synod of Arles, in reversing their sentence, restoring the deposed bishop, and the procedure of the pontiff soon after against Hilarius, bishop of Arles, and exarch of the seven Narbonnese provinces, who had presided at the synod above mentioned; whom he not only cut off from his communion, and, as far as in him lay, degraded, but every where defamed by his letters, were equally precipitate, unjust, and scandalous. In this attempt, however, on the rights of the Gallican church, Rome seems to have been more successful, through a peculiar felicity in the juncture, than in those formerly made on the churches of Africa. The prince then upon the throne, Valentinian the third, was both weak and credulous, and one over whom the pontiff appears to have had an unlimited influence. The pope, therefore, on this occasion, glad to recur to the secular arm, easily obtained from the emperor a rescript, exactly in the terms he desired, confirming all that he had done, commanding all the Gallican bishops to yield implicit obedience to the decrees and awards of the pontiff, and enjoining the magistrates of the several provinces to interpose their authority, in compelling those who should be summoned to Rome to obey the summons. Many attempts were used by Hilarius to effect a reconciliation; but he found it was utterly impracticable, except on such conditions as an honest man will ever account totally unworthy of regard—the sacrifice of truth, and the surrender of those rights and liberties of his church and people, with which, as a most sacred depositum, he had been entrusted. In this state, therefore, which surely a modern papist would think desperate, unreconciled to Christ's vicar, and as a rotten member cut off from the body of the faithful, being cut off from all connection with the church's visible head, died the famous Hilarius, bishop of Arles. And what shall we say of Roman consistency, when we reflect, that this very excommunicated, cursed, anathematized Hilarius, (I cannot say by what strange oversight) as well as Pope Leo, who, to the last, treated him in the manner we have seen, are both at present first-rate saints in the Roman calendar? What account can the Romish church give of this? If ye be curious to know, ye may consult Baronius, or any other of the hireling writers of that communion, whose business in brief it was to explain nonsense,

darken facts, confound the judgment, and reconcile contradictions.

In what further concerns the matter of appeals, I shall only, without multiplying instances, refer you to what happened in the cases of Talia, bishop of Alexandria, charged with simony and perjury; the two Gallican bishops, Salonius and Sagittarius, who had been convicted, before a synod at Lyons, of the crimes only of murder, adultery, robbery, and house-breaking, but whose merit, in appealing to the apostolic see, cancelled all in an instant, and procured, without further inquiry, a declaration of their innocence, and restoration to their bishoprics; and who, (I speak of the two last) in confidence of their security under the pope's protection, soon relapsed into the same enormities, were deposed a second time, and shut up in a monastery, to prevent a second recurrence to Rome. Ye may observe, also, the case of Hadrian, bishop of Thebes, in Thessaly; of Honoratus, archdeacon of Saloni, in Dalmatia; that of John, bishop of Lappa, in Crete; and that of Wilfrid, of York, in England. For many centuries ye will find, that the judgment of the apostolic see, as it affected to be styled, in contradistinction to others, was uniformly in favour of the appellant.

If history had given us no information about the persons, or cases, there would still be a strong presumption that, in so considerable a number, some had deserved the treatment they had received from the provincial, diocesan, or national synod, to which they had belonged. As the matter stands, there is the clearest historical evidence, that the far greater part of them had been justly degraded, and could never have obtained the patronage or countenance of any power, which did not make every consideration of religion and equity give way to her ambition.

What but this favourite maxim can account for the many falsehoods and forgeries, to which she so often recurred, in support of her exorbitant claims. The ignorance and superstition of the dark ages that ensued, (for those I have had occasion to refer to in this, and my two preceding lectures, are but as the evening twilight, compared with those which followed,) soon gave scope for attempting the very grossest kinds of imposition. And the friends and patrons of the hierarchy were not remiss

in using the opportunity while it lasted. The fruits of their diligence, in this way, were fictitious councils as well as canons, and fictitious decrees of real councils, false deeds of gift, such as the instrument of donation of Rome and all Italy, made, as was pretended, by the emperor Constantine to Pope Sylvester, and his successors in the popedom, the decretal epistles of the popes, not to mention the little legerdemain tricks of false miracles, and other such like artifices. For the lying spirit, which had gotten possession of the head, quickly diffused itself throughout the members; and every petty priest supported his particular credit among the people by the same arts, exhibited, as it were, in miniature, which were on a larger scale displayed by the pontiff, for the support of the great hierarchal empire. It must be owned, the greater part of their forgeries, especially Constantine's donation, and the decretal epistles, are such barefaced impostures, and so bunglingly executed, that nothing less than the most profound darkness of those ages could account for their success. They are manifestly written in the barbarous dialect which obtained in the eighth and ninth centuries, and exhibit those poor, meek, and humble teachers, who came immediately after the apostles, as blustering, swaggering, and dictating to the world in the authoritative tone of a Zachary, or a Stephen.

But however gross the artifices were, they were well suited to the grossness of the people, in times wherein almost all vestiges of literature and arts were buried in the ruins of the fallen empire. These acts and decretals had, accordingly, for several centuries, a powerful effect in imposing on mankind; an effect which continued, whilst its continuance was of principal moment, when all the little remains of knowledge in the world were in the hands of those, who considered it as their interest to deceive the people, and keep them in ignorance. Thus the progress, as well as the coming, of this power, has been indeed after the working of Satan, in signs and lying wonders, and all deceiveableness of unrighteousness.

Indeed, such sacrifices of truth, to what was called the cause of the church, have always been regarded as among the most harmless of their innumerable expedients. The term *pious fraud* was, in most places, and for several ages, not introduced

sarcastically, as it is used with us at present; nor was it imagined to connect ideas incompatible with each other; but employed to denote an artifice not only innocent but commendable. The patrons of sacerdotal power had every advantage therefore: their tricks, when undiscovered, wrought powerfully in their favour; and when discovered, (such was the woful superstition of the times,) were, on account of the supposed holy purpose to be effected by them, easily excused by all, and highly approved by many.

It is true, that now, since the restoration of letters, men's sentiments on these subjects are very much altered. Those graceless devices have been, for the most part, fully detected and exposed; insomuch, that all the learned and ingenuous part, even of Roman Catholics, quite ashamed of them, have long since abandoned their defence. But Rome may now laugh at a detection, which can never restore things to the state they were in before those frauds were employed. What has been at first produced solely by imposture, comes, through the slow but sure operation of time and immemorial custom, to acquire a stability totally independent of its origin. When that is the case, the discovery is not able to shake the fabric, to which the imposture originally gave a being. Antiquity supplies the place of truth. Custom rules the world, and is the principal foundation of obedience in all the governments that are, and ever were, upon the earth. It is but one of a thousand that is capable of examining into the origin of things; the remaining nine hundred and ninety-nine have no reason to assign for their obedience but custom, or what they are wont to see exacted on the one hand, and complied with on the other. A set of customs, gradually established, may, in like manner, be gradually abolished; but the discoveries of the learned (though not totally ineffective) have not a very sudden, and a very sensible effect upon them.

I shall, in my next lecture, proceed to illustrate, in other instances, the particular attention which Rome invariably gave to the great object, POWER; and consider how far the very best of her pontiffs sacrificed every other consideration to its advancement.

LECTURE XVI.

I PROCEED, in this lecture, to illustrate, in other instances, the particular attention which Rome invariably gave to the great object, power. The proof that I am now to produce, is different in kind from the former, but still corroborative of the same capital point in her policy, which was, to make every consideration of truth and right, give place to her ambition.

For this purpose, I shall not recur to those pontiffs, who were far from reaching even the low standard of virtue, recommended in the latter part of the Julian maxim, *aliis rebus pietatem colas.* And that there were popes, who, in no part of their conduct, showed that they either feared God, or regarded men, all persons, Popish and Protestant, who have the least acquaintance with church history, will readily admit. But I shall recur to one, who was thought, as much as any that ever sat in the papal chair, to mind the better part of the apophthegm, and was observant of piety, equity, and charity, in cases which did not interfere with the favourite pursuit; and shall clearly evince, that he was not a less rigid observer of the former part of it, *regnandi gratia jus violandum est*; that he did not hesitate at any means, falsehood and injustice, the prostitution of religion, and of the most sacred rites of humanity, when these could be rendered instrumental in promoting the primary papal object, POWER.

The pope I intend to produce as an example, is no other than Gregory I. a man at present adored in the church of Rome, as one of her most eminent saints, and respected as one of her most learned doctors. The Greeks, I know, were wont to style him (as it would seem) contemptuously, Gregory Dialogue, on account of some silly dialogues which he wrote. Yet even these are not inferior to some of the productions of their own approved authors in the same period. His pontificate com-

menced towards the end of the sixth century, and extended to the beginning of the seventh.

Who knows not the extraordinary zeal which this pope manifested against the Constantinopolitan patriarch, who, in those days, began to assume the title of universal bishop? For who is so great an enemy to the pride and ambition of others as the proud and ambitious! That a relentless jealousy was at the bottom of the violence which he showed on that occasion, there was no considerate and impartial person who did not discern then, and there is none of this character who does not discern still. It were unnecessary here to mention all the odious epithets by which he stigmatised that obnoxious appellation. Suffice it to observe, in general, that he maintained strenuously, that whoever assumed that heretical, blasphemous, and infernal title, (so he expressly terms it,) was the follower of Lucifer, the forerunner and herald of Antichrist, and that it neither did nor could belong to any bishop whatever. He had nothing, it appears of the prophetic spirit, else he would have spoken more cautiously of a title so soon afterwards assumed by some of his own successors. It must be owned, indeed, that in this conduct the Grecian patriarch was the precursor of the Romish. If, thereby, the pope is rendered antichrist, it is a deduction from Pope Gregory's reasoning, and not from mine.

Gregory, when that title was first assumed at Constantinople, was quite indefatigable in his applications by letter, and by the intervention of his nuncios, with the patriarch himself, and with the emperor, to effect the suppression of it. But all was to no purpose. The matter could never be made appear to them as of that moment, which Gregory was so immoderately solicitous to give it. They considered it only (like most of the titles then conferred on the potentates of the church) as a complimental and respectful manner of address, well befitting the bishop of the imperial city. Rome's remonstrances were accordingly made light of. The other patriarchs, particularly the Antiochian and the Alexandrian, Gregory endeavoured, by all possible means, but to no purpose, to engage in the quarrel. The bishop of Alexandria, probably with a view to mollify his incensed brother at Rome, gave him a title, which he thought would be deemed equivalent, calling him universal pope. But

his holiness had proceeded too far to be taken in by so simple a device, and therefore he did not hesitate to reject it with disdain, as being in the same way derogatory, with the other title, to the whole episcopal order. He did more: for, in order to show how different a spirit he was of, he assumed, for the first time, (and herein he has been followed by his successors,) this humble addition, *the servant of the servants of God:* servus servorum Dei. We have heard of people's making humility the subject of their vanity, and mortification the ground of their pride. The Pharisees were ostentatious of their dirty and disfigured faces when they fasted, and there are even some Christian sects who seem to make the Pharisees, in this respect, their pattern. The pope always since, to this day, introduces his bulls with the modest title assumed by Gregory. One would expect from it, that they should consist only of entreaties and lowly petitions to those whom he acknowledges to be his superiors and his masters. Instead of this, ye find him commanding imperiously, even with menaces, denunciations, and curses. Is this like a servant to his masters? If we could consider the title, therefore, as any thing but words, we should pronounce the using it as a sort of refinement in the display of power; adding insult to tyranny, like those despots, who, when they are inflicting tortures on their slave, mock him with the title of sovereign and lord.

About this time the emperor Mauricius, whom the pope could by no arts prevail on to enter into his views, nay, whom he found rather favourable to the use of a title, by which an honourable distinction was conferred on the bishop of the imperial residence, was first dethroned, and then murdered, by a centurion, one of his subjects and soldiers, who usurped his throne. The usurper Phocas (for that was his name) was a man stained with those vices which serve most to blacken human nature. Other tyrants have been cruel from policy, and through want of regard to justice and humanity; the cruelties of Phocas are not to be accounted for, but on the hypothesis of the most diabolical and disinterested malice. Witness the inhuman manner wherein he massacred five of his predecessor's children, all that were then in his power, before the eyes of the unhappy father, whom he reserved to the last, that he might

be a spectator of the destruction of his family before his death. The slaughter of the brother, and of the only remaining son of the emperor Mauricius, with all the patricians of any name who adhered to his interest, the methods by which Phocas got the empress Constantina, and her three daughters, into his power, with the murder of whom he closed the bloody scene, manifest a mind totally corrupted, incapable of being wrought upon by any principle of religion, sense of justice, or sentiment of humanity.

Unluckily for the Constantinopolitan patriarch, the innocent consort of his late sovereign, with the three princesses, her daughters, had taken refuge in one of the churches of the city. The prelate, moved partly by compassion to the royal sufferers, partly by the reverence of the place, would not permit them to be dragged by force from their asylum; but defended them, whilst there, with great spirit and resolution. The tyrant, one of the most vindictive and inexorable of mankind, and who could therefore ill brook this spirited opposition from the priest, thought it prudent then to dissemble his resentment, as it would have been exceedingly dangerous, in the beginning of his reign, to alarm the church. And he well knew how important, and even venerable, a point it was accounted, to preserve inviolate the sacredness of such sanctuaries. He desisted, therefore, from using force; and, by means of the most solemn oaths, and promises of safety, prevailed at length upon the ladies to quit their asylum. In consequence of which, they soon after became the helpless victims of his fury, and suffered on the same spot whereon the late emperor, and five of his sons, had been murdered a short while before.

Now what should we expect would be the reception which the accounts of this unnatural rebellion, and dethronement of Mauricius, the horrid butchery of the whole imperial family, the usurpation and coronation of such a sanguinary fiend as Phocas, would meet with at Rome, from a man so celebrated for piety, equity, and mildness of disposition, as Pope Gregory? Look into his letters of congratulation on the occasion, and ye will find them stuffed with the most nauseous adulation. Were we to learn the character of Phocas only from St. Gregory, we should conclude him to have been rather an angel than a man.

But if we recur to facts,—if we take our Saviour's rule, and judge of the tree by the fruits, (and I know no rule we can so safely follow,) we shall rather conclude him to have been a devil incarnate. The actions, on which this judgment is founded, are not only incontrovertible, but uncontroverted. Ye may read the account that is given of the earliest and the principal of these murders, by Gregory himself, in the preamble to the eleventh book of his epistles; where, to say the truth, they are recited with as much coolness, as though they were matters of the utmost indifference, and as though religion and morality could be nowise affected by such enormities.

Observe, then, in what manner the sanctity of a Gregory congratulates the blood-thirsty, but successful, rebel, regicide, and usurper. I shall give you a specimen of his manner in his own words. (L. 11. Ep. 36.) The classical scholar will make the proper allowances for the low Latinity of the seventh century. "Gregorius Phocæ Augusto." His exordium is, "Gloria in excelsis Deo, qui juxta quod scriptum est, mutat "tempora et transfert regna: et quia hoc cunctis innotuit, quod "per prophetam suum loqui dignatus est, dicens. Quia domi-"natur excelsus in regno hominum, et cui voluerit, ipse dat "illud." After this preamble, he observes, that God, in his incomprehensible providence, sometimes sends kings to afflict his people, and punish them for their sins. This, says he, we have known of late to our woful experience. Sometimes, on the other hand, God, in his mercy, raises good men to the throne for the relief and exultation of his servants. Then applying his remark to the present juncture, he adds, "De qua "exultationis abundantia, roborari nos citius credimus, qui be-"nignitatem pietatis vestræ ad imperiale fastigium pervenisse "gaudemus."—Then breaking out in a rapture, no longer to be restrained, he exclaims, "Lætentur cœli et exultet terra, et "de vestris benignis actibus, universæ reipublicæ populus nunc "usque vehementer afflictus hilarescat. Comprimantur jugo "dominationis vestræ superbæ mentes hostium. Releventur "vestra misericordia contriti et depressi animi subjectorum." Proceeding to paint their former miseries, he concludes with wishing, that the commonwealth may long enjoy the present happiness. A few instances, and but a few, of the benignity,

and piety, and mercy, of this emperor, here so highly extolled by Gregory, may be learnt from the treatment, above related, given to his predecessor's family. Another letter to Phocas, written soon after, the pope begins in this manner: (Ep. 43.) "Considerare cum gaudiis et magnis actionibus gratiarum libet, "quantas omnipotenti Domino laudes debemus, quod remoto "jugo tristitiæ ad libertatis tempora sub imperiali benignitatis "vestræ pietate pervenimus." His not having a nuncio at Constantinople, at the time of the emperor's accession, he excuses from the insupportable tyranny of the former reign, and concludes in this manner: "Sancta itaque Trinitas vitam ves-"tram per tempora longa custodiat, ut de bono vestræ pietatis "quod tarde suscipimus, diutius gaudeamus."

"As a subject, and a Christian," says Mr. Gibbon [a], "it "was the duty of Gregory to acquiesce in the established go-"vernment; but the joyful applause with which he salutes the "fortune of the assassin, has sullied, with indelible disgrace, "the character of the saint. The successor of the apostles "might have inculcated, with decent firmness, the guilt of "blood, and the necessity of repentance: he is content to cele-"brate the deliverance of the people, and the fall of the oppres-"sor; to rejoice that the piety and benignity of Phocas have "been raised by Providence to the imperial throne; to pray "that his hands may be strengthened against all his enemies; "and to express a wish, that, after a long triumphant reign, he "may be transferred from a temporal to an everlasting king-"dom." He proceeds:—"I have traced the steps of a revo-"lution, so pleasing, in Gregory's opinion, both to heaven and "earth; and Phocas does not appear less hateful in the exer-"cise than in the acquisition of power. The pencil of an im-"partial historian has delineated the portrait of a monster, his "diminutive and deformed person, &c. Ignorant of letters, of "laws, and even of arms, he indulged, in the supreme rank, a "more ample privilege of lust and drunkenness; and his brutal "pleasures were either injurious to his subjects, or disgraceful "to himself. Without assuming the office of a prince, he re-"nounced the profession of a soldier; and the reign of Phocas "afflicted Europe with ignominious peace, and Asia with deso-

[a] History, chap. xlvi.

"lating war. His savage temper was inflamed by passion, hardened by fear, exasperated by resistance or reproach. The flight of Theodosius, the only surviving son of Mauricius, to the Persian court, had been intercepted by a rapid pursuit, or a deceitful message: he was beheaded at Nice; and the last hours of the young prince were soothed by the comforts of religion, and the consciousness of innocence."

Now that we may be satisfied, that all Gregory's fulsome and detestable flattery was not without a view, we need only peruse the congratulatory letter to the empress Leontia, immediately following: for, by this channel, he thought it most prudent to suggest, for the first time, the distinguishing favour he expected they would show, in return, to the see of St. Peter, as the popes had now, for some centuries, affected to denominate the church planted at Rome. He begins this, as the other letters above-mentioned, with such high strains of praise and thanksgiving, as suited only the birth of the Messiah: his expressions are generally borrowed from those used in scripture, in relation to that memorable event; and he never forgets to contrast the present happiness with the evil times which had preceded. "Reddatur ergo creatori omnium ab hymnidicis angelorum choris, gloria in cœlo, persolvatur ab omnibus gratiarum actio in terra, &c."

His manner of applying to this lady is indeed very artful. After recommending to her, and her most pious lord, the see of the blessed apostle Peter, he signifies his persuasion, that what he had said was quite unnecessary, that their own piety must have suggested the same thing to them before. He takes notice of the great prerogatives of Peter in such a manner, (which was now become common at Rome, though no where else in the church) as though they had been his peculiarly; namely, the founding of the universal church, the power of the keys, the power of retaining sins, and of remitting them, or of binding and loosing; whence he takes occasion indirectly, but with great address, to insinuate, that their hopes of those favours, which none but Peter could bestow, must be in proportion to their zeal for his honour. "Unde nobis dubium non est, quam forti amore ad eum vos stringitis, per quem solvi ab omnibus peccatorum nexibus desideratis. Ipse ergo sit

"vestri custos imperii; sit vobis protector in terra, sit pro vo-"bis intercesso, in cœlo." It was then from Peter only they were to expect remission. To his guardianship their government was recommended, and their persons to his protection on the earth, and intercession in heaven. There is (ye must know) much less word of the providence and protection of God, and of the intercession of Jesus Christ, now that people had got themselves so liberally provided in guardians, protectors, and intercessors, among the saints. The abuse thrown with such an unspairing hand on the unfortunate emperor who had preceded, as though he had been one of the worst of tyrants, naturally leads one to enquire into his character. The fault, of which he is principally accused by contemporary historians, and which, doubtless, proved the cause of his untimely fate, was too much parsimony: than which, no vice could render him more odious to the soldiery, who were, in those degenerate times of the empire, lazy, undisciplined, debauched, rapacious, and seditious. As the government was become military, the affection of the army was the principal bulwark of the throne. It was ever consequently the interest of the reigning family to secure the fidelity of the legions as much as possible. This, in times so corrupt, when military discipline was extinct, was to be effected only by unbounded indulgence, and by frequent largesses. These the prince was not in a condition to bestow, without laying exorbitant exactions on the people. For levying these the army were, as long as they shared in the spoil, always ready to lend their assistance. Hence it happened, that among the emperors, the greatest oppressors of the people were commonly the greatest favourites of the army. The revolt of the legions, therefore, could be but a slender proof of mal-administration. It was even, in many cases, an evidence of the contrary.

But it is more to our present purpose, to consider the character, which this very Pope Gregory gave of Mauricius, when in possession of the imperial diadem. For if the former and the latter accounts, given by the pontiff, cannot be rendered consistent, we must admit, that, first or last, his holiness made a sacrifice of truth to politics. Now it is certain, that nothing can be more contradictory than those accounts. In some of his letters to that emperor, ye will find the man, whom he now

treats as a perfect monster, extolled to the skies, as one of the most pious, most religious, most Christian princes, that ever lived; and withal, (which deserves particular notice) as the most gracious and bountiful. In proof of this, I could adduce a variety of passages from several letters of the pontiff, written at different times, some earlier, and some later. Take a few for a specimen. Let the first be (L. 5. Ep. 63.) to Mauricius. "Inter armorum curas et innumeras sollicitudines, quas indefesso studio, pro Christianæ reipublicæ regimine sustinetis, "magna mihi cum universo mundo lætitiæ causa est, quod pietas vestra custodiæ fidei, qua dominorum fulget imperium, "præcipua sollicitudine semper invigilat. Unde omnino confido, quia sicut vos Dei causas religiosæ mentis amore tuemini, "ita Deus vestras majestatis suæ gratia tuetur et adjuvat." Here the emperor's pious zeal, solicitude, and vigilance, for the preservation of the Christian faith, being such as no public cares, no tumults of war, could ever divert his attention from, are represented as the glory of his reign, as a subject of joy, not to the pontiff only, but to all the world. Again, (L. 6. Ep. 30.) to the same, he concludes in these words;—"Omnipotens "autem Deus serenissimi domini nostri vitam, et ad pacem ecclesiæ, et ad utilitatem reipublicæ Romanæ, per tempora longa custodiat. Certi enim sumus, quia si vos vivitis, qui cœli "dominum timetis, nulla contra veritatem superba prævalere "permittitis." Could any man suspect, that one who writes in so earnest a manner, did not entertain the highest opinion of the emperor's piety and zeal, as well as the most fervent wishes for his welfare. I shall produce but one other example (L. 8. Ep. 2.) to the same. The subject of the letter is thus expressed in the title: "De denariis sancto Petro transmissis." After the warmest expressions of gratitude, on account of the pious liberality and munificence of his imperial majesty, and after telling how much the priests, the poor, the strangers, and all the faithful, were indebted to his paternal care, he adds, "Unde actum est, ut simul omnes pro vita dominorum concorditer "orarent, quatenus omnipotens Deus longa vobis et quieta "tempora tribuat, et pietatis vestræ fælicissimam sobolem diu "in Romana republica florere concedat." Yet he no sooner hears, which was not long after, of the successful treason of

Phocas, in the barbarous murder of his sovereign and his family, an event, the mention of which, even at this distance, makes a humane person shudder with horror, than he exclaims, with rapture, "Glory to God in the highest." He invites heaven and earth, men and angels, to join in the general triumph. How happy is he, that the royal race is totally exterminated; for whom, but a little before, he told us, that he poured out incessant and tearful prayers, (*lachrymabili prece* is one of his expressions) that they might, to latest ages, flourish on the throne, for the felicity of the Roman commonwealth. Surely truth and sincerity had no part in this man's system of morality.

An honest heathen would at least, for some time, have avoided any intercourse or correspondence with such a ruffian as Phocas; but this Christian bishop, before he had the regular and customary notice of his accession to the purple, is forward to congratulate him on the success of his crimes. His very crimes he canonizes (an easy matter for false religion to effect) and transforms into shining virtues, and the criminal himself into what I may call a second Messiah, he that should come for the salvation and comfort of God's people. And all this was purely that he might pre-engage the favour of the new emperor, who (he well knew) entertained a secret grudge against the Constantinopolitan bishop, for his attachment to the preceding emperor Mauricius; a grudge which, when he saw with what spirit the patriarch protected the empress dowager, and her daughter, soon settled into implacable hatred.

But Gregory, who died soon after the aforesaid revolution, did not live to reap the fruits of his accursed policy. Indeed, Boniface III. the next but one who succeeded him, for the pontificate of his immediate successor was very short, did very soon obtain of the emperor not only the revocation of the edict, by which the title of *universal bishop* had been conferred on the patriarch of Constantinople, but the issuing of a new decree, whereby that title was entailed in perpetuity on the Roman pontiff, who was vested with the primacy of all the bishops of the empire. And the church of Rome, by accepting these, not only declared that she derived her honours from the secular powers, but proclaimed herself, in the opinion of Gregory, who is acknowledged to have been as great a pontiff as ever filled the

chair of St. Peter, to be vain-glorious, proud, profane, impious, execrable, blasphemous, antichristian, heretical, diabolical; for these are some of the epithets he bestows on whosoever shall accept the title of *universal bishop*.

Now if such was the conduct of a Gregory, who, it must be owned, in cases, wherein their politics did not interfere, appears to have been endowed with several virtues and good qualities, what are we to expect from other popes? We need not be surprised that a Zachary, in the middle of the eighth century, should, for the interest of the holy see, assist with his counsel, and countenance, the usurper Pepin, to depose his master and benefactor Childerick, king of France, with all his family, and to possess himself of his crown and kingdom; a favour which Pepin, in the very next pontificate, returned in kind, assisting the pope to usurp the imperial dominions in Italy; or that pope Stephen and king Pepin became reciprocally guarantees of each other's usurpations, the former by the sanction of religion, the latter by an armed force. As little need we wonder at the many flagrant injustices of other pontiffs, when they happened to be influenced by the like motives.

After so much has been said of Gregory, it may not be amiss to make some remarks on his character, that we may not be thought to attribute to him things absolutely incompatible. To me he appears to have been a man, whose understanding, though rather above the middle rate, was much warped by the errors and prejudices of the times wherein he lived. His piety was deeply tinctured with superstition, and his morals with monkery. His zeal was not pure, in respect either of its nature or of its object. In respect of its nature, it was often intolerant; witness the sanguinary measures he warmly recommended against the Donatists; and in respect to its object, it is manifest, that his attachment was more to the form than to the power of religion, to the name than to the thing. His aim was not so much to turn men from sin to God, and from vice to virtue, as to bring them by any means within what is called the pale of the church, and, consequently, under the dominion of its rulers; to draw them from the profession of paganism to the profession of Christianity. If this was effected, he cared not though they remained more than half heathen still. His zeal was exactly

that of those Pharisees, who compassed sea and land to make a proselyte, which, when they had accomplished, they rendered, him twofold more a child of hell than themselves. Witness the advice he gave to the monk Augustine, who had been sent into Britain for the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, not to abolish their paganish ceremonies, but rather to adopt them, and give them a new direction, that so the conversion of the people might be facilitated, and their relapse to the superstition of their fathers prevented. The plain language of this conduct is, if they are but called Christians, and are subjects of the church, to which they yield an external conformity, it matters not what sort of Christians they are at bottom, or how much of the pagan they may still retain in their heart, principles, and conduct.

I must own, that this turn of thought has a very natural connection with that kind of zeal, which has for its object the erection, or preservation, of a hierarchy, or what is called an ecclesiastical polity. With zealots of this stamp, a bare exterior will serve the purpose. Obedience, whether voluntary or extorted; attachment, whether sincere or dissembled; submission, whether it proceed from love or from fear; equally, as in other worldly polities, tend to support the secular honours and emoluments of the different orders, which are the great pillars of the fabric.

This kind of zeal is, in like manner, the true source of persecution for conscience sake, and of a maxim inseparably connected with the principle of intolerance, that the end will sanctify the means. That Gregory had, through the misfortune and error of the times, thoroughly imbibed both these principles, will never be doubted by any person, who, with judgment and impartiality, reads his history. Indeed, in the sacrifices which he made, as appears from the above observations, of truth, humanity, and integrity, we can hardly, at present, though the maxim were admitted, consider the end as having goodness enough to justify the means. His object in the contest with the Constantinopolitan patriarch, about the title of universal bishop, was not the advancement of Christianity, or so much as the profession of it; it was not the enlargement of the pale of the church, or the increase of the number of her nominal children. It was purely the honours and pre-eminence of his see.

But such was the infatuation of the times, that even this was become, in their imaginations, an important and a religious object.

Nor was this the case only with the see of Rome, though it was evident that she had drank most deeply of this spirit, but, in some measure, of every particular church. It was become a popular and plausible cloak, for the pride and ambition of churchmen, that they acted out of a principle of zeal for the dignity of the see with which they were entrusted, that is, said they, for the honour of the founder. This was thought to be of great weight, if the founder happened to be a saint in the calendar; of greater still, if he was, or (which is all one) if he was believed to have been, a scripture saint, or an evangelist; and greatest of all, if an apostle. They acted on the supposition, that they could not more effectually ingratiate themselves with their patron, though in heaven, than by exalting the church he had erected or endowed upon the earth, above the churches erected or endowed by others, and, consequently, in exalting him above his fellow saints. They, in this way, were disposed to excuse their interferences with one another, thinking it reasonable, that each should do his best for the saint to whom he was most indebted, and who, from being the founder, commonly became the tutelar saint of his diocese or parish. And then, as to the idea they supposed those saints to entertain of the dignity of their respective churches, it was altogether secular, or suited to the apprehensions of mere men of the world. This dignity consisted not at all in the virtue and piety of the parishioners, but in the opulence and pre-eminencies of the clergy, in the extent and populousness of the parish or diocese, the magnificence of the churches, sacred utensils, and vestments, particularly the rank, the titles, the privileges, the prerogatives, and the riches of the pastor.

It is true, the apostles, when on this earth, before they were fully instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven, and the spiritual nature of the Messiah's government, were found contending with one another who should be greatest. And it is equally true, that their Lord and Master severely reprehended their conduct, and taught them, that unless they were converted, and acquired a very different disposition, as well as different senti-

ments concerning true greatness, far from being great in that kingdom, they should never enter it. And it is to be believed, nay, their conduct demonstrates, that they were soon after far superior to thoughts so grovelling, to an ambition so ill adapted to their profession. But from the sentiments which gradually sprang up in the church, on the decline of true knowledge and genuine piety, men seemed universally to be convinced, that in these squabbles for greatness, eminence, and precedency, the apostles and saints were still as keenly engaged in heaven as ever they had been on the earth; and that they could not be more highly gratified, than by the successful struggles of their clients here in maintaining their respective honours and pre-eminencies.

Nor does any person seem ever to have entered more into these views than the celebrated Pope Gregory. He was ever holding forth the prerogatives of St. Peter, (who was, in his time, acknowledged as the founder of his church) nor did he make any ceremony of signifying, that this prime minister of Jesus Christ, like other prime ministers, would be most liberal of his favours to those who were most assiduous in making court to him, especially to them who were most liberal to his foundation at Rome, and most advanced its dignity and power. So much for St. Gregory, and for the nature and extent of Roman papal virtue.

LECTURE XVII.

In the preceding lecture, I illustrated, at some length, in the instance of Gregory, one of the best of the Roman pontiffs, how far the maxim could go, of reckoning every thing just and lawful, by which the papal power could be advanced, and the supremacy of Rome secured. But it was not in one or two ways only, that they showed their attention to the aforesaid maxim, but in every way wherein they could apply it to advantage. I have also observed to you some of their other practices of the like nature and tendency. The only artifice I shall consider at present, is the claims which Rome so long and so assiduously affected to derive from the prerogatives of the apostle Peter, the pretended founder of that see. I have hinted at this, by the way, once and again; but as it was one of her most potent engines, it will deserve our special attention.

In my first discourse, on the rise of the pontificate, I showed sufficiently how destitute this plea is of every thing that can deserve the name of evidence, and observed, that the first pontiff who seemed directly to found the honours of his see on the privileges of Peter, was Pope Innocent, about the beginning of the fifth century. As to the apostolic age, and that immediately succeeding, there is not a vestige of either authority or precedency in the Roman pastor, more than in any other bishop or pastor of the church. Nor is this to be imputed to a defect of evidence through the injury of time, in relation to the point in question. So far from it, that next to the sacred canon, the most ancient and most valuable monument we have of Christian antiquity, is a very long letter to the Corinthians, from a bishop of Rome, Clement, who had been contemporary with the apostles, and is mentioned by Paul, in one of his epistles. So much the reverse do we find here of every thing that looks like authority and state, that this worthy pastor, in the true spirit of primitive and Christian humility, sinks his own name entirely

in that of the congregation to which he belonged, and does not desire that he should be considered otherwise than as any other individual of the society; a manner very unlike that of his successors, and quite incompatible with their claims. The letter is titled and directed thus: "The church of God, which sojourns at Rome, to the church of God, which sojourns at Corinth." The words of the congregation were then considered as of more weight than those of any bishop, even the bishop of Rome. Nor is there, in the whole performance, any trace of authority lodged either in him, or in his church, over the church of Corinth, or, indeed, over any person or community. In every part, he speaks the language not of a superior to his inferiors, a master to his servants, or even a father to his children, but of equal to equal, friend to friend, and brother to brother. He uses no dictating and commanding: he only exhorts and entreats. To the contraveners there are no menacing denunciations, such as have, for many centuries, accompanied the papal bull, of the vengeance of Almighty God, and the malediction of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul. The modesty of the style of this truly primitive pastor, is an infallible index of the modesty of his pretensions; and, let me add, a very strong evidence of the great antiquity and perfect authenticity of the epistle.

The first who appeared to claim any thing like authority, was Victor, bishop of Rome, (or pope, if ye please to call him so, though that name was not then peculiar,) who lived near the end of the second century. This man, the first noted stickler for uniformity, quarrelled with the Asiatic bishops for following a different rule in the observance of Easter, or the feast of the passover, from that followed in the west. This festival appears from the beginning to have been distinguished by Christians, not on its own account as a Jewish solemnity, in commemoration of their deliverance from Egypt, but on account of its coincidence, in respect of time, with those most memorable of all events, the death and resurrection of Christ. In the east, they were accustomed to observe the 14th day of the first month, on whatever day of the week it happened. In the west, when the 14th did not fall on Sunday, they kept it the first Sunday after. When Victor found that the Orientals were no more

impelled by his menaces than persuaded by his arguments, to relinquish the custom they had been taught by their founders, and to adopt implicitly the Roman practice, he, in a rage, cut them off from his communion. It is of importance here to observe, that this phrase, as used then, was not (as it is often misunderstood by modern readers,) of the same import with excommunicating, in the strictest sense. It only denotes refusing, in respect of one's self, to join with such a person in religious exercises. And this every bishop whatever, considered himself as entitled to do, in regard to those whom he thought to err in essential matters. That the pope himself considered it in this manner, is manifest from the pains he took (though to no purpose) to induce other bishops to follow his example; sensible, that his refusal of communicating with the Quarto-decimans, as they were called, did neither exclude them from the communion of the church, unless the resolution had become universal, nor oblige any other bishop to exclude them, till satisfied of the propriety of the measure. Accordingly, he is not considered by his contemporaries as assuming an extraordinary power, but as using very absurdly and uncharitably a power which every one of them had as well as he. Even those of the same opinion with him in regard to Easter, would not concur in this measure. They looked on the time of observing that festival as merely circumstantial, and therefore not a sufficient reason for a breach. Such had been the opinion of his own predecessors, and such also was the opinion of all his successors, till the time of Constantine, when, by the emperor's influence with the Nicene council, the practice of the west was established throughout the church. So far, therefore, is this passage of history, as some have represented it, from being an evidence of power in the Roman pastor at that early period, that it is a very strong evidence of the contrary. In Victor, we have a pope that was wrong-headed and violent enough to attempt an extraordinary exertion, if he had had but as much influence as would have secured to his endeavours some probability of success. But in any other way than that of example and persuasion, he knew that his endeavours could only serve to render himself ridiculous. Of so little account, however, were his judgment and example made, that, in this step, to his no small mortification, he

remained singular. All were ashamed of it, and his immediate successor did not judge it proper to adopt it. I need not add, that on this occasion we hear not a syllable of the authority of St. Peter, or of any right in the Roman see to direct and command all other churches.

Of no greater consequence was the excommunication of St. Cyprian, and most of the African bishops, about half a century afterwards, by Pope Stephen, on occasion of the question about the validity of heretical baptism. These sentences were mere *bruta fulmina*, had no consequences, and, as Augustin observes, produced no schism. The pope's excommunication, when unsupported by other bishops, did, in effect, rebound upon himself, and he himself was properly the only person cut off by such a sentence from the full communion of the church. Nothing can be juster than the sentiment of Firmilian on this subject. "O Stephen," says he, "by attempting to separate "others from thee, thou hast separated thyself from all other "churches. He is the true schismatic who departs, as thou "hast done, from the unity of the church." When the bishop of Rome acted unreasonably, no person considered himself as under any obligation to follow his example more than that of any other pastor in the church. Nor was Stephen's conduct, any more than Victor's, imitated by his successor; for though the African bishops rebaptized, and most others did not, they lived peaceably in communion with each other till rebaptization was condemned in the following century, first by the synod of Arles, and then by the council of Nice.

Even as far down as the pontificate of Damasus, towards the end of the fourth century, when the see of Rome was, through the munificence of the emperors and persons of opulence, greatly increased in riches and splendour, and, consequently, in dignity and power, a synod of Italian bishops, with the pope at their head, in a letter to the emperor Gratian, thus express themselves in regard to the superiority of the see of Rome: "The bishop of Rome is above other bishops, in respect of the "prerogatives of his apostolic see, but on a level with them in "respect of his ministry." Let it be observed, that the term *apostolic* was not yet peculiarly appropriated to the Roman see, but was conceived to belong to it, as has before been observed,

in common not only with all the churches that had been founded by apostles, but even with all patriarchal and metropolitical churches. By his superiority, therefore, no more is meant than such a precedency as they supposed Peter to have enjoyed amongst his fellow-apostles. As to the latter part of the declaration, the equality of the ministry in the bishops, though it be the doctrine of all antiquity, nothing can be more repugnant to what has been the doctrine of Rome, for many centuries, namely, that all power, both spiritual and temporal, is lodged in the pope; that all the bishops are no more than his deputies; that all the authority and jurisdiction they are vested with, are but emanations from the plenitude of power lodged in him. But Damasus, who, though far from being unambitious, had not formed a conception of so exorbitant a claim, appears to have been well satisfied with the respect shown to his see in the above declaration.

From this event, to the time of Innocent, in the beginning of the fifth century, though the popes piqued themselves not a little on the tradition they had, however implausible, that their see was founded by the apostle Peter, they did not pretend to derive any peculiar authority from him; but in maintaining their power, always recurred to the dignity of Rome, the queen of cities, the capital of the world; to the imperial rescripts, the decrees of Sardica, which, on some occasions, they wanted to impose on mankind for the decrees of Nice; and to canons, real or suppositious, of ecumenical councils. That there were real canons, which gave the bishop of Rome a precedency before other bishops, is not denied; but in these it is never assigned as a reason, that this church had Peter for its founder, but solely, that the city was the world's metropolis.

But no sooner was this other foundation suggested, than its utility for the advancement of the papal interest was perceived by every body. First, this was a more popular plea. It made the papal authority much more sacred, as being held directly *jure divino*, whereas, on the other plea, it was held merely *jure humano.* Secondly, this rendered that authority immoveable. What one emperor gave by his rescript, another might resume in the same manner; the canons of one council might be repealed by a posterior council. Such alterations, in matters of

discipline, arrangement, and subordination, had been often made. But who durst abrogate the prerogatives granted by his Lord and Master to the prince of the apostles, and by him transmitted to his church? Thirdly, the power claimed in this way was more indefinite, and might be extended, nobody knows how far, as long as there was found enough of ignorance and superstition in the people to favour the attempts of the priesthood. Besides, when the claim was of divine right, the pontiff had this advantage, that he alone was considered as the proper interpreter of his own privileges. The case was totally different with all human decrees, authority, and claims whatever. Add to this, that whilst they derived from any terrestrial power, they could never raise their claims above the authority which was acknowledged to be the source. But when the source was believed to be in heaven, no claim over earthly powers, however arrogant, could endanger their exceeding in this respect. And though I believe, that all these considerations were not fully in view at the beginning, yet it is certain, that for these purposes they employed this topic, in the course of a few centuries, when they would have all power, secular as well as spiritual, to have been conferred by Peter, a poor fisherman of Galilee, upon the pope.

It was some time, however, before the old ground of canons, imperial edicts, and ancient custom, was entirely deserted. Zosimus, the successor of Innocent, and a most aspiring pontiff, recurred to these as the sole foundation of his pretended right of judging in the last resort. It was, perhaps, prudent not to desert a plea at once which had great weight with many, and to risk all upon a novelty, which, till men's ears were familiarized with it, might, for aught he knew, be but little regarded. In process of time, however, the credulity of the people keeping pace with their degeneracy in knowledge, and virtue, and rational religion, dispelled all apprehensions on this head, and the repeal of the canons of Sardica by other councils, compelled his holiness to recur to the new ground pointed out by Innocent, which was found, upon trial, to afford a much firmer bottom whereon to erect the wonderful fabric of the hierarchy.

Accordingly, in less than fifty years after this plea had been ushered in by Innocent, it began to be a common topic with the

pontiffs, and all the advocates of pontifical jurisdiction. Hilarius, in the first letter he wrote after his accession to the papal chair, mentions, with much exultation, the primacy of St. Peter, and the dignity of his see. There was the greater need of this alteration, as Rome was, both in riches and splendour, daily declining, and, from being the imperial city, was become only the capital of Italy, a Gothic kingdom, as Constantinople was, in strictness, the only imperial city, and was now become much superior to the other in populousness and wealth. Accordingly, in the time of Pope Gelasius, about the close of the fifth century, in a synod, consisting mostly of Italian bishops, and dependents on the pontiff, a decree was obtained, declaring boldly, (as if, says Bower, all records had been destroyed, and men knew nothing of what had happened but a few years before,) "that it was not to any councils, or the decrees of any, that "the holy Roman Catholic and apostolic church owed her primacy, but to the words of our Saviour, saying, in the gospel, "'*Thou art Peter*,' &c.; and thereby building the church upon "him, as on a rock which nothing could shake; that the Roman church, not having spot or wrinkle, was consecrated and "exalted above all other churches, by the presence, as well as "by the death, martyrdom, and glorious triumph, of the two "chief apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, who suffered at Rome "under Nero, not at different times, as the heretics say, but at "the same time, and on the same day; and that the Roman "church is the first church, being founded by the first apostle; "the church of Alexandria the second, being founded by his "disciple, St. Mark, in his name; and that of Antioch the "third, because St. Peter dwelt there before he came to Rome, "and in that city the faithful were first distinguished by the "name of Christians."

Why was there no mention here, I must beg leave to ask, of the church of Jerusalem, which had been infinitely more highly honoured, even in their own way of estimating honours, than any or all of those churches put together? It had been honoured by the presence, the ministry, the martyrdom, the resurrection, and glorious triumph, of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole founder and king of the church universal; honoured by the descent of the Holy Ghost, on the whole college of apostles,

whereby they were both authorized and qualified to commence their ministry; honoured further by the express command of Jesus Christ to all his apostles, to begin the discharge of their office at Jerusalem.

But, says the Romanist, it was for this very reason, the murder of the Lord of glory, that the Jews were rejected from being God's people, and Jerusalem in particular humbled, in being denied the honours she had otherwise enjoyed, as the capital of the church of Christ. Is it then reasonable, that Jerusalem should be punished for the death of the Master, and Rome rewarded and honoured for the slaughter of his servants? Shall that be pleaded as a merit to the one, which is accounted a dishonour to the other? And if not the guilt of the murderers, but the testimony given to the truth by the sufferers, and the importance of the oblation, are the things to be considered, the martyrdom of Jesus Christ was infinitely more important, in respect both of the victim, and of the consequences, than that of all his apostles and followers put together. It is true, the infidel Jews were rejected as a nation, because they had previously rejected the Lord's Messiah; and, in this fate, the unbelieving inhabitants of Jerusalem justly shared, when their temple and polity were destroyed; but this was no reason why the church of Jerusalem, that is, the believing inhabitants and believing Jews, a church which Christ himself had planted, and which was, for some time, watered by the joint labours of all his apostles, should be involved in that punishment. On the contrary, their faith, their fortitude, their glory, are enhanced by the unbelief, apostacy, and unrelenting cruelty, of their countrymen and fellow-citizens. And that our Lord himself meant to show a particular respect to his faithful servants or church in that city, is manifest from what has been observed, the order he gave to his disciples, to wait *there* the fulfilment of the Father's promise, the effusion of the Spirit in a variety of miraculous gifts, after which they were *there* to begin their ministry. For out of Zion this new law was to issue, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

I adduce all this, more as an *argumentum ad hominem* to the papist, than as implying, that it was intended that one church ought to have jurisdiction over another, by whomsoever founded.

The disciples were commanded to call no man father upon the earth, because they had only one Father, who is in heaven, and they themselves were all brethren; and to call no one *master*, teacher, or guide; because Christ alone was their master, their teacher, their guide. It is scarcely worth while to criticise minutely this decree of Gelasius. It founds their whole claim on a tradition, which has been shown to be not only uncertain, but exceedingly improbable. It is somewhat remarkable, that he takes just as much of tradition as will suit his purpose, and no more. The tradition was as universal, and much more probable, that Peter was likewise the founder of Antioch; but this he did not judge convenient to admit. Besides, that Mark founded Alexandria, in Peter's name, had never been heard of in the church before. In this pitiful manner, he was obliged to mutilate and misrepresent tradition, that by all means he might avoid letting it appear, that the dignity of those several cities in the empire, and that alone, had determined the rank of their respective bishops. With a gross and ignorant people, such as the Romans were now become, bold assertions would supply the place both of arguments and of testimonies. The pope had also this further motive in this new conceit, to mortify, as much as possible, the patriarch of Constantinople, (the only prelate powerful enough to be a rival,) by exalting the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch above him; and doubtless, by this expedient, he hoped the more easily to gain the two last mentioned bishops to his side.

Nothing from this time forwards was heard from the patronizers of Romish usurpation, but *Thou art Peter, and I give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, and so forth. These things began now to be echoed from every quarter. What is often repeated, how weak soever, never fails to make some impression, especially on the illiterate. The hard stone is at length hollowed by the eave's drop, however feeble and unperceivable the effect of a single drop must be accounted.

Matters were advanced so far at the beginning of the sixth century, that when Pope Symmachus was summoned to appear before an assembly of bishops, and undergo a trial for several crimes of which he was accused, it was pleaded by some, (for the first time indeed,) that no synod or council had a right to

judge the pope; that he was accountable for his actions to God alone. It must be owned, that this notion, though at present like an article of faith with every genuine son of Rome, (I mean not every Roman Catholic,) appeared to the generality of Christians, at the time it was broached, exceedingly extravagant and absurd. But the synod (for it was not a general council) which Theodoric king of the Goths had convened, consisting entirely of Italian bishops, who were, in several respects, dependent, and had now, of a long time considered the exaltation of the Roman see as the exaltation of their country, and the only means left of raising themselves above the eastern part of the empire; though they were not inclinable to give a positive decision in this extraordinary question, were satisfied to supersede the necessity of deciding it, by absolving the pontiff from all the charges brought against him, and restoring him to all his authority both within and without the city.

It was impossible to foresee how far the advocates for the hierarchy would carry the privileges they derived from the prince of the apostles, as they commonly affected to style St. Peter. What shall we think of this high prerogative, the title, the absolute jus divinum, to commit all crimes with impunity, at least in this world, being amenable to no jurisdiction, temporal or spiritual? Yet nothing less than this was the pope's benefit of clergy! Some, to avoid one absurdity in giving an unbounded licence, have run into another, maintaining the impeccability of popes in action, as well as their infallibility in judgment. But let any man who has read their history, even as written by their own friends and favourers, believe them to be either impeccable, or infallible, if he can. I shall only remark, by the way, that, in an Italian synod, assembled little more than a century before the pontificate of Symmachus, the bishops, however partial to the pope, were so far from exempting him from the jurisdiction of a council, that they presented a petition to the emperor Gratian, begging it, as a special favour, that the bishop of Rome might not be judged by a subordinate magistrate, but either by the emperor himself, or by a council. And to obtain so much as this, was then thought a very great acquisition, though now it would be accounted extremely derogatory to the holy see.

The progress of the pontiffs was indeed rapid. One attainment, though at the time it was made, it appeared the utmost extent of their ambition, always served but as a step to facilitate the acquisition of something still higher. "A person "never mounts so high," said Cromwell, "as when he does "not know himself how far he desires to go." Nothing is more certain than that, in later centuries, there were many prerogatives strenuously contended for by the papal see, which the popes of earlier ages explicitly disclaimed.

But to return to the new plea, in support of the hierarchy, first suggested by Innocent, and afterwards solemnly ratified in a synod by Gelasius, there was even a gradation in the use they made of this, and in the consequences they deduced from it. At first, it was little more than a sort of divine title, in the see of Rome, to that honour and precedency which she had for several ages enjoyed by such a human title as I have formerly explained. The altering of their ground, therefore, seems not at first to have been so much intended for extending their prerogatives, as for rendering them more venerable, and more unassailable, by every human power. But matters did not long rest here.

For some ages, the primacy of Peter was understood by nobody to imply more than that he was a president, chairman, or first in rank, in the apostolic college. But now that his prerogatives were considered as the ground-work of the Roman claims, every true Romanist was disposed to stretch them as much as possible. The primacy they first raised into a superintendency; then the superintendency into a supremacy; and the supremacy they at length exalted into despotism, or an absolute and uncontrollable jurisdiction. Again; what was granted to Peter by his Master, was no longer considered in the way it had been formerly, as a personal reward for the important confession he was the first to make. Every prerogative, which they fancied to have belonged to him, they now ascribed to the pope as the representative of his person, and the inheritor of all that was his. What a wonderful deduction from a number of premises, every one of them assumed without proof, and some of them in direct opposition to the clearest evidence.

As their claims advanced, their style varied. In the primi-

tive ages, the utmost that was pretended, was, that the church, or Christian society in Rome, was founded by the apostle Peter; that is, in other words, that the first converts to Christianity, in Rome, were made by his preaching and ministry. But not satisfied with what is implied in this account, that he was the first who preached the gospel to them, they afterwards would have that capital to be the peculiar see of St. Peter, where he was settled as the bishop, or fixed pastor, of the congregation. The Romans were denominated the peculiar people of St. Peter. The pontiff was become his successor in office. Nay, as if this were not enough, they quickly affected to talk of Peter as still personally present there, and of the pope as the organ through which he spoke. Their episcopal throne is accordingly the chair of St. Peter. What is given to that church is given to St. Peter. To disobey the pope is to affront St. Peter; nay, it is to rebel against God, and to renounce his Son Jesus Christ, and is therefore no better than total apostacy. This was now become their manner universally.

Nay, so far did Pope Stephen the second, about the middle of the eighth century, carry this matter, that in writing to Pepin, king of France, on a very urgent occasion, he thought proper to use the apostle's name instead of his own, and thus begins his letter: "Simon Peter, the servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, "to three most excellent kings, Pepin, Charles, and Carloman, "to all the holy bishops, abbots, &c.; to all the dukes, counts, "and captains of the army; and to the whole people of France: "grace to you and peace be multiplied. I am the apostle Peter, "to whom it was said, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will "I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail "against it. And to thee will I give the keys of the kingdom "of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be "bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, "shall be loosed in heaven. Feed my sheep.* As all this was "said to me peculiarly, all who hearken to me, and obey my "exhortations, may be certain that their sins are forgiven, and "that they will be admitted into everlasting life, cleansed from "all guilt," &c. He proceeds to enjoin them to assist the pope, his vicar, and the Romans, his favourite people, his chosen flock, by making war upon the Lombards, those ravening wolves, as

they would hope for remission here, or admission into heaven hereafter; and assures them, that in this entreaty and command, he is joined by our lady, the virgin Mary, the mother of God, the thrones and dominions, the principalities and powers, and the whole multitude of the heavenly host. Now this, on Pope Stephen's authority, ye may call the third epistle of Peter. But on comparing it with the former two, we cannot help remarking the wonderful change in the apostle's style. In this he is a perfect braggart; whereas in those, we find not a syllable of his high prerogatives and claims. So far was he then from assuming any superiority, that he put himself on a level not only with apostles, but with every minister of the word.—*The elders* (says he, I Pet. v. 1.) *that are amongst you, I exhort, who am also an elder.* The Greek words are more emphatically expressive of equality than the English, πρεσβυτερους τους εν ὑμιν παρακαλω ὁ συμπρεσβυτερος. The "presbyters amongst you," he says not, I their archpresbyter command, but "I their fellow-presbyter exhort." And to what does he exhort them? To "feed the flock of God, "which was among them, acting the parts of bishops or over-"seers, not of lords, over God's heritage, but serving as pat-"terns to the flock, teaching them not so much by precept as "by example." Was it not, however, as under shepherds, that they were to feed and guide the Christian community? Undoubtedly. Who then was the chief shepherd? This also we learn from his words. It was not Peter himself. He is very far from giving such a suggestion. But it was Jesus Christ, his and their common master. "When the chief shepherd, "ὁ αρχιποιμην, shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that "fadeth not away." Nothing here of that arrogant and imperious style which his pretended successors so soon assumed, and so injuriously fathered upon him. In regard to the spirit of the epistles, I say not how different, but how opposite, are they! This, transmitted by Pope Stephen, is an incentive, by every means, the grossest flattery not excepted, to war, bloodshed, and vengeance. Those we have in the sacred canon, breathe nothing but humility, peace, and love, a meek and patient submission to the worst evils that men could inflict. In regard to the new-fangled titles conferred on Mary, of *our lady*, and the *mother of God*, so foreign from the simple manner of the in-

spired penmen, I suppose a Romanist would account for them by saying, that the apostle must have learnt these improvements on his language from St. Cyril, who had, long ere now, carried to heaven the news of the Nestorian controversy, and his own triumph at the council of Ephesus.

To give you a specimen of the mode of proving which now came in vogue.—The pope is the sole foundation of the Christian edifice; for Christ said to Peter, *On this rock I will build my church.* In other places, however, all the apostles are represented equally as foundations. Again, the pope alone has the whole jurisdiction; for Christ said to Peter, *To thee will I give the keys of the kingdom* of heaven, and *whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven.* Yet the same power is, almost in the same words, in another passage, given to all the apostles, nay, and to the whole church. The pope is the chief shepherd, the only apostle and pastor that derives his power from Christ: all other bishops are under-shepherds that derive their power from the pope. And how is this evinced? After the shameful fall of Peter, in thrice denying his master, Jesus Christ judged it meet to bring him thrice solemnly to profess his love, and subjoined this precept, as affording the apostle the means of giving the only satisfactory evidence of the truth of his profession. *Feed my sheep,* and *feed my lambs.* Hence the Romanist sagely concludes, that this charge belonged only to Peter. He might, with equal reason, have maintained, that as the question, *Lovest thou me?* was put only to Peter, and the threefold profession required of none, and given by none but him, it was not a duty incumbent on the other apostles, to love their master, or to confess him. It is on this ground, also, that some have dared to advance, in contradiction equally to the sense and to the words of scripture, that Peter was properly the only apostle of Jesus Christ, and that all the rest were the apostles of Peter. Seriously to refute such a principle, would be almost as absurd as to maintain it.

Nay, to show a little more of their wonderful dexterity in reasoning, and the surprising advantages they derive from this fund of St. Peter, the pope's infallibility is thus demonstrated by them. Our Lord said to Peter, before the denial, as being the only disciple who was in imminent danger, (for the traitor is

out of the question,) *Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*—Those who think it necessary to mind the scope of the place, and the principles of reason, allege, that the prayer that his faith might not fail, means evidently, that he might not proceed so far as to make a total defection from Christianity, which he would soon, by repeatedly abjuring his master, appear on the brink of doing. But who thinks it necessary to mind these in disputing? The import of this passage, says the Romanist is—Christ prayed that Peter might have the gift of infallibility, or, as they also term it, inerrability, in his judgment concerning all articles of Christian doctrine. Peter then alone was, and consequently the pope, his sole heir and representative, alone is, infallible.

I shall give but one other specimen of this Romish logic. When, in the ages of the church posterior to those I have yet remarked on, the popes claimed to be the true depositaries of all secular as well as spiritual jurisdiction, how satisfactory was the proof they produced in support of their claim, from this passage: *They said, Lord, behold here are two swords. And he said, It is enough.* Here they shrewdly ask, Why were there neither more nor fewer than two swords? The answer is plain: It was to denote that there were two sorts of power, neither more nor fewer, deposited with the church, the temporal and the spiritual; and that these two were sufficient for all her occasions. But why are these supposed to be entrusted solely to the pope? If they were entrusted to Peter, they are certainly entrusted to the pope. And that they were entrusted to Peter is manifest from this, that Peter afterwards used one of them, as we learn from the evangelist John, in cutting off the right ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest. And if he had one of these swords, what good reason can be given why he should not have both? Thus, by a regular deduction, as convincing to a Romanist as demonstration, it is proved, that the pope is the only fountain of all authority, both temporal and spiritual.

LECTURE XVIII.

In my preceding lectures on the rise and progress of the papacy, I have been more particular, and treated things more in detail, than I had at first intended. But on so complex a subject, to which so great a variety of different, and even dissimilar, circumstances contributed, it is not easy to consult at once brevity and perspicuity. Besides, in this deduction, I have found it impossible to elucidate the latent causes which co-operated in rearing this wonderful fabric, in a narrative of its advancement, according to the order of time. To have attempted this would have led me to make an abridgement of ecclesiastic history, and to interweave with it such critical inquiries as would serve to expose the secret springs and progress of that enormous power. But this would have occasioned a still more minute detail, and would, after all, have scarcely been so satisfactory as the manner I have adopted. A number of different springs in the great machine, which operated separately, though simultaneously, I have been obliged, for the sake of distinctness, to consider separately. In the deductions I have given of each, I have conformed myself, as much as possible, to the order of time, that the different phases, if I may so express myself, of the same plea, at different periods, might be considered and compared. Something of this kind ye may have observed from what has been said on the subject of appeals, and on the different foundations on which Rome, at different periods, raised her title to jurisdiction. But when leaving one topic, I recurred to another, I have been obliged to turn back, as it were, in order to resume the history of that particular also, from the beginning. My object, in these discourses, is not to give a narrative of facts, but from known facts, with their attendant circumstances, by comparing one with another, to deduce principles and causes. I have already gone so far this way, not with a view to supersede the accounts given by the historian,

but rather to enable you to read those accounts with greater attention and advantage. Many circumstances, apparently trivial, in a detail of facts, are apt to be overlooked by a hasty reader, which yet may be of very considerable consequence for bringing to light the springs of action, and accounting for other things with which, at first, to a superficial observer, they may appear to have little or no connection. In what remains of this enquiry into the Roman hierarchy, I do not intend to be so particular, but shall briefly take notice of some of the principal causes (for to name all would be impossible) which co-operated in rearing this strange medley of divine (as it was called) and human, spiritual and secular, dominion.

There is none who has read church history with the least attention, but must be sensible, that from the very beginning of papal power, it has been much more considerable and conspicuous in the west than in the east. Indeed, for some centuries, the Roman pontiff hardly made any pretensions in the east, except in regard to his precedency, which, as it had been settled by early but tacit consent, and preserved by custom, the eastern prelates were not disposed to controvert. But when, from a bare precedency, in point of rank, he came to extend his claim to jurisdiction, he always met from them a vigorous and often successful opposition. The case was not entirely similar with the western bishops, over whom the pope obtained a considerable ascendant, much earlier than it was in his power to do, in regard to his oriental brethren. Several causes may be assigned for this difference.

In the first place, in some of the earliest ages, if we except the inhabitants of Rome, Carthage, and some principal cities, those in the west were, in general, beyond all comparison, inferior both in knowledge and acuteness to the Orientals, and were therefore much better adapted to be implicit followers, first, during the church's worldly obscurity, of the most respectable characters; afterwards, during her worldly splendour, of the most eminent sees. Victor, bishop of Rome, in the violent measures he adopted against the Quarto-decimans, in Asia, in the second century, seems to have had no adherents, even among those who, in the observance of Easter, the only point in dispute, followed the same custom with himself. As little had

Stephen I. in the third century, in his measures against the African rebaptizers of those who had been baptized by heretics or schismatics. Ireneus, bishop of Lyons, on account of his personal character, was of ten times more authority even in the west than Pope Victor; and Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, than Pope Stephen. But matters underwent a very great change after Christianity had received the sanction of a legal establishment. Then, indeed, the difference between one see and another, both in riches and in power, soon became enormous. And this could not fail to produce, in the sentiments of mankind, the usual consequences. Such is the constant progress in all human polities whatever. In the most simple state of society, personal merit, of some kind or other, makes the only noticeable distinction between man and man. In polities purely republican, it is still the chief distinction. But the farther ye recede from these, and the nearer ye approach the monarchical model, the more does this natural distinction give place to those artificial distinctions created by riches, office, and rank.

When Rome was become immensely superior both in splendour and in opulence, to every western see, she would, with great facility, and, as it were naturally, (if nothing very unusual or alarming was attempted,) dictate to the other sees in the west; the people there having had, for several ages, very little of the disputatious, dogmatizing humour of their brethren in the east. It no doubt contributed to the same effect, that Rome was the only see of very great note, which concurred with several of them in language; Latin being the predominant tongue among the western churches, as Greek was among the eastern. It was natural for the former, therefore, to consider themselves as more closely connected with the Roman patriarch than with the Constantinopolitan, or any of the other oriental patriarchs. A similar reason, when not counteracted by other causes, operated among the Greeks, to make them prefer a Grecian patriarch before a Latin one.

I acknowledge, as I hinted before, that this natural bias was frequently surmounted by other causes. When the Orientals were divided into parties by their disputes, as was often the case, the Romans could then obtain almost any thing from the side they favoured, such was the violence of the parties against

each other. But this humour, though it was not entirely without effect, was but temporary with them, and commonly lasted no longer than the controversy which gave rise to it. Like an elastic body, though it may be very much bent by the proper application of external force, no sooner is the force removed, than of itself it resumes its former state. Nevertheless, on bodies of this sort, such violence, frequently repeated, will produce some change.

One thing which rendered it very difficult to effect a hearty coalition between Greeks and Latins, was the contempt which the former were, from early childhood, inured to entertain of the genius and understanding of the latter. Notwithstanding the superiority the Romans had obtained over them by subduing their country, and all the eastern monarchies which had sprung out of the Macedonian conquests, the Grecians could not help considering them as no better than a sort of barbarians, a little more civilized than the Scythians or the Tartars. "These men," said Photius, the Greek patriarch, who, in the ninth century, proved the occasion of the schism between the oriental churches and the occidental; these men, speaking of the Latins, "sprung from the darkness of the west, have corrupted every thing by their ignorance, and have even proceeded to that pitch of impiety and madness, as to foist words into the sacred symbol confirmed by all the councils." The Greeks often bragged that the Latins were their scholars. "They have nothing," said they, "which they have not gotten from us, not even the names of their ceremonies, mysteries, and dignities, such as baptism, eucharist, liturgy, parish, diocese, bishop, presbyter, deacon, monk, church, which they often stupidly misunderstand, and wretchedly misapply." But though the Greeks never showed much inclination to a cordial union with the Latins, they were far from being so closely united among themselves as the Latins generally were. I have already hinted at some of the causes of this difference in the Greeks, such as their ingenuity itself, which could ill brook the dictatorial manner, and their disputative and inquisitive turn of mind.

But there was another remarkable cause arising from the different constitutions of these two great parts of the empire, the

oriental and the occidental. The former, as being beyond all comparison the richest, the most populous, and the most civilized, was sooner brought to a regular form of government, ecclesiastical as well as civil. I had before occasion to observe, that the ecclesiastic polity was, in a great measure, modelled upon the civil. All the cities of greatest eminence, as well as the most ancient churches, were situated in the east; Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Constantinople, Cesarea, Ephesus, were cities of that note, with which nothing in the west, if we abstract Rome itself, was worthy to be compared. Accordingly, except Milan in Italy, and Carthage in West Africa, there does not appear to have been any bishop in the occidental churches above the rank of a metropolitan.

And even those I have named, Milan and Carthage, were considerably inferior, both in jurisdiction and in wealth, not only to the three great patriarchal sees in the east, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch, but even to the principal of those called exarchal, such as Ephesus and Cesarea. Consequently, the pope had not in the west a single bishop of consideration and rank, sufficient to be, in any degree, qualified for either a rival, or a check. It is manifest, that in Gaul, Spain, and Britain, there were not, at least for some ages, any who had the inspection of more than a single province. The disparity, therefore, was so exceedingly great in the west, as to give the utmost scope for the ambition of a see, which, in respect of worldly circumstances, had been so remarkably distinguished.

When there is an equality, or even nearness, in riches and power, among those who share it, we may be assured, there will always be emulation; but if you raise one of the possessors distinguishably above the rest, you not only destroy their emulation, but give a contrary direction to their ambition, and make them fain to court the man whom they cannot hope successfully to emulate. Nay, the very rivalship which the rest entertain of one another, leads them to act this part with regard to him whom more fortunate circumstances has raised into their superior; that, by his means, they may the more easily surmount their equals. Rome, it must be owned, was not at first considered as a patriarchate. The whole of Italy made but one civil

diocese, which, as I observed once before, was, on account of its extreme populousness, as well as opulence, divided into two lieutenancies, or vicariates. The one was called the vicariate of Rome; the other, that of Italy: the capital of this last was Milan. —The first title, therefore, the pope enjoyed, after the church, in Constantine's time, had been modelled in this manner, was the vicar of Rome, as the bishop of Milan was called the vicar of Italy; nor was the pope, if I remember right, honoured with the name of patriarch, though he was always allowed the precedency, till the synod of Chalcedon in the fifth century. But as he had been, time immemorial, denominated the *vicar*, and as it is not easy to suppress a title firmly established by custom, it is not improbable that the bishops of Rome, near that period, have judged it more political not to attempt the suppression; but to add to *vicar*, by way of explanation, in order to disguise its inferiority, the words, *of Jesus Christ*, and with this addition, to arrogate it as peculiar.

The bishop of Milan, who, by that first division was vicar of Italy, was on a foot of equality, in respect of his title, and even of the nature, though not of the extent, of his jurisdiction, with the bishop of Rome; insomuch, that nothing but the immense disparity there was in riches and splendour, and almost all external circumstances, could have prevented him from being a rival. This disparity, however, did effectually prevent all rivalry, and make it conducive both to the interest and to the ambition of the former, to forward, instead of opposing, the designs of the latter. It is evident, therefore, that the popes, even from the beginning, had, in the west, incomparably a more advantageous situation for the acquisition of power, than any patriarch in the east was possessed of. It is, in like manner, evident, and might almost have been concluded beforehand, that he could not, without a concurrence of events quite extraordinary, have brought the Oriental, to the same implicit submission and obedience, to which he actually brought the Occidental, churches.

It is proper also here to observe another fortunate circumstance, which operated very early for the advancement of his authority. To the vicarage of Rome belonged ten provinces, including the islands Sicily, Corsica, and Sardinia. As in these

there were no metropolitans; as all were under the immediate jurisdiction of the capital itself, and thence were denominated suburbicary provinces, the vicar of Rome, or pope, as he was called, had not only all the power of an exarch over the whole ten provinces, but that also of the primate in every province. There was in him a coalition of both jurisdictions, the metropolitical and the patriarchal. As the metropolitan had the charge of ordaining the bishops of his province, and the patriarch that of ordaining the metropolitans, the bishop of Rome had the charge either by himself, or by his delegates, of ordaining every bishop within the provinces of his vicariate. These rights he gradually extended, as circumstances favoured his views, first, to the whole prefecture of Italy, which included West Illyricum, and West Africa; afterwards, to all the occidental churches, Gaul, Spain, and Britain; and lastly, as of divine right, and therefore unalienable, over the whole catholic church. This last claim, however, hath subsisted only in theory.

That these pretensions were introduced gradually, is a fact indisputable. Pope Leo, in one of his letters still extant, to the bishops of Gaul, explicitly disclaims the right of ordaining them. That pontiff was not deficient either in ambition or in abilities. And one would have thought he might have been better instructed in the divine and unalienable rights of his see, if any conception of such rights had been entertained in his time. But the zenith of the hierarchy was too sublime a pinnacle to be attained by a few bold leaps. It was by innumerable steps, not considerable, taken severally, that that amazing and dizzy height at length was reached. It was not till after repeated successes in the attainments of objects far below the summit, that this great antitype of Lucifer said in his heart, *I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit upon the mount of the congregation*, (or church, as the word imports,) *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.*—But to return; there can be no doubt that the want of patriarchs in the west did greatly facilitate the attempts of the Roman pontiffs to supply their place, first, in consecrating their metropolitans, and afterwards even in ordaining the suffragans.

Again; one great advantage which Rome derived from her vast opulence and rich domains, both in Italy and in the neighbouring islands, was the power she acquired of employing and supporting missions, in distant parts of Europe, for the propagation of *the gospel*. When, by means of missions and expense, churches were planted in any country, they were always accounted dependent on that as the mother church by whom the missionaries were employed. In this manner, by the monk Augustine, a missionary of Gregory I., the Anglo-Saxons in Britain were converted from idolatry near the end of the sixth century. The Britons, or ancient inhabitants, had indeed been Christians for some ages before. But they were ere now dispossessed of their ancient habitations, and confined by those new comers to a small part of the island, the principality of Wales. In the beginning of the eighth century, the Germans were, in like manner, converted by Winfrid, or Boniface, a missionary of Gregory II., which Boniface, I may remark in passing, is the first ecclesiastic on record, who took a solemn oath of fealty to St. Peter, that is, to the Roman see,—a security which was afterwards exacted by the pope, not only of all legates and servants of his court, but of all bishops whatever; and the more effectually to prevent its being omitted, it was engrossed in the pontifical, among the rites to be observed in consecration. Nor did a question of this kind of pre-occupancy prove, about a century afterwards, the least considerable cause of the great schism still subsisting between the oriental and occidental churches. The disputed titles of Ignatius and Photius to the patriarchate of Constantinople, and even the differences in doctrine and ceremonies between the Latins and the Greeks, would have been much more easily adjusted than the lucrative pretensions that both Rome and Constantinople made to the superiority and patronage of the new converted churches of Bulgaria. That of right from all the principles which then prevailed, they should have been dependent on the Constantinopolitan patriarch, can scarcely be made a doubt. But Rome was ever interfering; and this was too great an acquisition to lose sight of. Paul, indeed, avoided to promulge the gospel in places where Christ had already been made known, lest he should build on another man's foundation,

and thereby bestow his time and labour less profitably for the common cause. That maxim answered admirably, when the end was the advancement of a spiritual kingdom, peace, and truth, and righteousness, the honour of God, and happiness of mankind. He might then well say, that if Christ is preached, wheresoever and by whomsoever, I do, and will, rejoice. But the case was quite altered, when conversions to a nominal, more than real, Christianity, were made the instruments of a new sort of conquest,—were engines for extending ecclesiastical dominion. Constantinople could do a good deal in this way, but Rome still more.

I shall mention another excellent piece of papal policy, first introduced by Damasus, near the end of the fourth century, and commonly called the legatine power. The introduction of this practice, and what gave rise to it, I shall give you from our English biographer's history of that pope.—" Acholius, bishop " of Thessalonica, was the first who enjoyed, under Damasus, " the title of the pope's vicar. He was nominated to this office, " in East Illyricum, on the following occasion: Illyricum, com-" prising all ancient Greece, and many provinces on the Da-" nube, whereof Sirmium was the capital, had, ever since the " time of Constantine, belonged to the western empire. But " in the year 379, Dacia and Greece were, by Gratian, disjoin-" ed from the more westerly provinces, and added, in favour of " Theodosius, to the eastern empire, being known by the name " of East Illyricum, whereof Thessalonica, the metropolis of " Macedon, was the chief city. The bishops of Rome, as pre-" siding in the metropolis of the empire, had begun to claim a " kind of jurisdiction, or rather inspection, in ecclesiastical mat-" ters, over all the provinces of the western empire; which was " the first great step whereby they ascended to the supremacy " they afterwards claimed and established. This, Damasus was " unwilling to resign, with respect to Illyricum, even after that " country was dismembered from the western, and added to the " eastern, empire. In order, therefore, to maintain his claim, " he appointed Acholius, bishop of Thessalonica, to act in his " stead; vesting in him the power which he pretended to have " over those provinces. Upon the death of Acholius, he con-" ferred the same dignity on his successor Anysius, as did

"the following popes on the succeeding bishops of Thessa-"lonica; who, by thus supporting the pretensions of Rome, "became the first bishops, and, in a manner, the patri-"archs, of East Illyricum, for they are sometimes distin-"guished with that title. This, however, was not done "without opposition; the other metropolitans not readily "acknowledging for their superior, one who, till that time, "had been their equal. Syricius, who succeeded Dama-"sus, enlarging the power claimed by his predecessor, de-"creed, that no bishop should be ordained in East Illyricum, "without the consent and approbation of the bishop of Thessa-"lonica. But it was some time before this decree took place. "Thus were the bishops of Thessalonica first appointed vice-"gerents of the bishops of Rome, probably in the year 382. "The contrivance of Damasus was notably improved by his suc-"cessors, who, in order to extend their authority, conferred the "title of their vicars, and the pretended power annexed to it, on "the most eminent prelates of other provinces and kingdoms, "engaging them thereby to depend upon them, and to promote "the authority of their see, to the utter suppression of the an-"cient rights and liberties both of bishops and synods. This "dignity was, for the most part, annexed to certain sees, but "sometimes conferred on particular persons. The institution "of vicars was, by succeeding popes, improved into that of le-"gates; or, to use De Marca's expression, the latter institu-"tion was grafted on the former. The legates were vested with "a far greater power than the vicars; or, as Pope Leo ex-"presses it, were admitted to a far greater share of his care, "though not to the plenitude of his power. They were sent, "on proper occasions, into all countries, and never failed exert-"ing, to the utmost stretch, their boasted power; oppressing, "in virtue of their paramount authority, the clergy as well as "the people, and extorting from both large sums, to support "the pomp and luxury in which they lived."

Thus far our historian. Nothing, indeed, could be better calculated, for both extending and securing their authority, than thus engaging all the most eminent prelates in the different countries of Christendom, from a principle of ambition, as well as interest, to favour their claims. Rome was already gotten

too far, as we have seen, above the episcopal sees of the west, for any of them to think of coping with her, and was, besides, too distant to excite their envy. But it would greatly gratify the covetousness, as well as the pride and vanity, of those bishops whom she was thus pleased to distinguish, to be, by her means, raised considerably above their peers and neighbours.

Add to this, that not only the ambitious views of individuals served to promote the schemes of Rome, but the general ambition of the clerical order greatly forwarded her views. The western empire soon came to be divided into a number of independent states and kingdoms. Now, in the form into which the church had been moulded before the division, a foundation had been laid for incessant interferings and bickerings in every country, between the secular powers and the ecclesiastical. In these interferings, the principal advantage of the latter arose from the union that subsisted among the churches of different countries, as members of one great polity. And even this connection, (however possible it might have been to preserve it, for the single purpose of promoting piety and virtue,) it was absolutely impossible to preserve, for the purpose of spiritual dominion, unless they were united under a common head. The republican form of any kind, democratical or aristocratical, could never answer in such a situation of affairs. Not only are commonwealths slower in their operation than the exigencies of such a state would admit, but they can do nothing without the authority of a legislative council; and this it would be in the power of a few temporal princes totally to obstruct, either by preventing them from assembling, or by dispersing them when assembled. And from any state, or kingdom, it would be in the power of the chief magistrate to prevent a deputation being sent. The monarchical form, therefore, supported by the prejudices and superstition of the people, was the only adequate means both of preserving and of extending the high privileges, honours, titles, and immunities, claimed universally by the sacred order, and which they most strenuously contended for, as the quintessence of Christianity, the sum of all that the Son of God had purchased for mankind. This could not fail to induce them to put themselves under the protection of the only bishop

in the west, who was both able and willing to support their bold pretensions.

I must likewise add, however unlikely, that the ambition of secular princes concurred in the establishment and exaltation of the hierarchy. Nothing can be more evident, than that it was the interest of the princes of Christendom, and their people, to combine against it. But though this was the general and most lasting interest of all the states of Europe, what was, or at least was conceived to be, the immediate interest of a particular prince, or state, might be, to favour the hierarchy. Let it be observed, that the European monarchs were almost incessantly at war with one another. Neighbour and enemy, when spoken of states and kingdoms, were, and to this day too much are, terms almost synonymous. The pope, therefore, could not make even the most daring attempt against any prince, or kingdom, which would not be powerfully backed by the most strenuous endeavours of some other prince, or kingdom, whose present designs the pope's attempts would tend to forward.

If England was the object of papal resentment,—if the enraged ecclesiarch had fulminated an excommunication, or interdict, against the kingdom, or issued a bull deposing the king, and loosing his subjects from their oaths and allegiance, (for all these spiritual machines were brought into use one after another,) France was ready to take advantage of the general confusion thereby raised in England, and to invade the kingdom with an armed force. The more to encourage the French monarch to act this part, the pontiff might be prevailed on (and this hath actually happened) to assign to him the kingdom of which he had pretended to divest the owner. A man may afford to give what never belonged to him. But if the owner found it necessary to make submissions to the priest, the latter was never at a loss to find a pretext for recalling the grant he had made, and re-establishing the degraded monarch. In like manner, when France was the object of the pontiff's vengeance, England was equally disposed to be subservient to his views. Nay, he had the address, oftener than once, to arm an unnatural son against his father. Such was the situation of affairs all Europe over. Those transactions, which always terminated in the advancement of papal power, could not fail, at last, to

raise the mitre above the crown. Every one of the princes, I may say, did, in his turn, for the gratifying of a present passion, and the attaining of an immediate object, blindly lend his assistance in exalting a potentate, who came, in process of time, to tread on all their necks, and treat both kings and emperors, who had foolishly given their strength and power to him, as his vassals and slaves.

It were endless to take notice of all the expedients which Rome, after she had advanced so far as to be esteemed, in the west, the visible head of the church universal, and vested with a certain paramount, though indefinite, authority, over the whole, devised, and easily executed, both for confirming and extending her enormous power. It is true, she never was absolute in the east; and, from about the middle of the ninth century, these two parts of Christendom were in a state of total separation. But that became a matter of less consequence to her every day. The eastern, which may be said to have been the only enlightened, and far the most valuable, part of the empire, in the days of Constantine, was daily declining, whilst the western part was growing daily more considerable. In the eastern empire, one part after another became a prey to Turks and Saracens,—Egypt, Barbary, Syria, Asia, and at length Greece, Macedonia, and Thrace. The only part of the western empire that not only was, but still continues to be, subjected to the depredations of these barbarians, is Proconsular and West Africa. Whereas, in the western and northern parts of Europe, there were, at the same time, springing up some of the most powerful and polished, and, I may now add, the most enlightened monarchies and states, with which the world has ever been acquainted. The very calamities of the east, particularly the destruction of the eastern empire, the last poor remains of Roman greatness, and the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, left the western patriarch totally without a rival, and Christendom without a vestige of the primitive equality and independence of its pastors.

When Rome had every thing, in a manner, at her disposal, it was easy to see that all canons, in regard to discipline, and decrees, in relation to doctrine, would point invariably to the support of this power. Hence the convenient doctrines of

transubstantiation, purgatory, prayers and masses for the dead, auricular confession, the virtue of sacerdotal absolution. Hence the canons extending so immensely the forbidden degrees of marriage, the peculiar power in the popes of dispensing with these and other canons, the power of canonization, the celibacy of the clergy, the supererogatory merits of the saints, indulgences, and many others.

There is, indeed, one right that has been claimed, and successfully exerted by Rome, which, as being a most important spring in this great and complex machine of the hierarchy, will deserve a more particular notice:—I mean, the pope's pretended title to grant exemptions to whomsoever he pleases, from subjection to their ordinary ecclesiastical superiors. But this I shall reserve for the subject of another lecture.

LECTURE XIX.

FROM what has been discovered, in the course of our enquiries into the rise, the progress, and the full establishment of the papacy, we may justly say, that if happiness consist in dominion, (which it certainly does not, though all mankind, by their conduct, seem to think it,) what a wonderful good fortune has ever attended Rome! From the first foundation of the city, by a parcel of banditti, she rose but to command, and gradually advanced into an empire of such extent, renown, and duration, as has been unexampled in the world, either before or since. And from the first declension of that enormous power, for it could not subsist always, she is insensibly become the seat of a new species of empire, which, though not of equal celebrity with the former, is much more extraordinary, and perhaps more difficult to be surmounted, being deeply rooted in the passions and sentiments of men.

Nay, how fortunate has been this queen of cities in what concerned both the formation and the advancement of this second monarchy. She continued the imperial city during the nonage of the hierarchy, that is, as long as was necessary to give her priest, though under the humble title of pastor, the primacy, or precedency among his brethren, for these two terms were at first synonymous, and by the wealth and splendour to which she raised him, to lay the foundation of those higher claims he hath since made, of supremacy and jurisdiction over them. And she ceased to be the seat of empire at the critical period when the residence of a court must have eclipsed his lustre, confined him to a subordinate part on the great theatre of the world, and stifled, in the birth, all attempts to raise himself above the secular powers. Had the eastern empire remained to this day, and Constantinople been the imperial residence, it would have been impossible that her patriarchs should ever have advanced the claims which the Roman patriarch not only advanced, but compelled the Christian world to admit. When

Rome was deserted by the emperors, her pontiff quickly became the first man there; and in the course of a few reigns, the inhabitants came naturally to consider themselves as more connected with him, and interested in him, than in an emperor who, under the name of their sovereign, had his residence and court in a distant country, who spoke a different language, and whose face the greater part of the Romans did not so much as know. Nor was the matter much mended in regard to them after the division of the empire, as the royal residence, neither of the emperor of the west, nor afterwards of the king of the Goths, was Rome, but either Milan or Ravenna.

And when, in succeeding ages, the pope grew to be, in some respect, a rival to the German emperor, the Romans, and even many of the Italians, came to think, as it might have been foreseen that they would, that their own aggrandizement, the aggrandizement of their city, and of their country, were more concerned in the exaltation of the pontiff, who, by the way, was then, in a great measure, a creature of their own making, (for the office was not then, as now, in the election of the conclave,) than in that of a monarch, who, from whatever origin he derived his power, was, in fact, an alien, and not of their creation, and who was as ill situated for defending them against their enemies, as the successors of Constantine had been before. Of the inability of both to answer this purpose, the invasions and conquests made at different times by Goths and Lombards, Franks and Normans, but too plainly showed. In short, had Rome never been the imperial city, its pastor could never have raised himself above his fellows. Had it continued the imperial city, he might, and probably would have had, such a primacy, as to be accounted the first among the patriarchs, but without any thing like papal jurisdiction over church and state. Had Rome remained the seat of empire, the pope's superiority to councils had never been heard of. The convocation of these, whilst the empire subsisted, would, in all probability, have continued, as it was for several ages, in the hands of the emperor. The dismemberment of the empire tended but too visibly to subvert the emperor's claim, and occasion the setting up of another in its stead. A sovereign has no title to convoke the subjects of another sovereign, of whatever class they be, and call them out

of his dominions, whatever title he may have to assemble any part of his own subjects within his own territories. Now whatever weakened the emperor's claim, strengthened the pope's. Immemorial custom had taught men to consider councils as essential to the church. And if the right to call them could no longer be regarded as inherent in any secular prince, where would they so readily suppose it to inhere as in him, to whose primacy in the church they had been already habituated? And even after the dismemberment of the empire, and the succession of a new power over part, under the same title, had it been possible for the emperors of Germany, who, in the former part of the eleventh century, made and unmade popes at their pleasure, to have made Rome their residence, and the capital of their empire, the pope, as Voltaire justly observes, had been no other than the emperor's chaplain. Nay, much of the power which the former, in that case, would have been permitted to exercise, would have been more nominal than real, as it would have been exercised under the influence of a superior. But luckily for the pope and for Italy, to reside at Rome was what the emperor could not do, and at the same time retain possession of his German dominions, of which he was only the elective sovereign.

The obscurity of the occidental, in the beginning, compared with the oriental churches, occasioned that their ecclesiastic polity was left imperfect, so as to give Rome too great an ascendency in that part of the world; the gradual but incessant decline of those eastern nations, whose opulent sees were alone capable of proving a counterpoise to the power of Rome; and, on the other hand, the slow, but real advancement of the occidental countries, after the power of the pontiff had been firmly established; their real but late advancement in arts, populousness, wealth, and civilization, all alike conspired to raise him. His rivals sank, his subjects rose.

For many ages, he seems to have conceived no higher aim than to be at the head of the executive and the judicial power in the church. No sooner was that attained than his great object came to be the legislative power. Ye do not find, for several centuries, the least pretext made by the pope, of a title to establish canons, or ecclesiastical laws; his pretence was mere-

ly, that he was entrusted with the care that the laws enacted by councils should be duly executed. He was then only, as it were, the chief magistrate of the community; nothing now will satisfy him but to be their legislator also. A doctrine came accordingly much in vogue with the partizans of Rome, that the pope was not subject to councils, nay, that he was not only independent of them, but above them; that he was himself entitled to make canons, to declare articles of faith, to pronounce what was orthodox, what heterodox, and that he needed not the aid of any council.

If such were really the case, all the world, popes as well as others, had been greatly deceived for many ages. When an effectual remedy was at hand, they had thought it necessary to take a very difficult and circuitous method to attain a cure, at most not more certain. To what purpose bring such a multitude together from all the quarters of the globe, with great expence and infinite trouble, to tell us, after whole days spent in chicane, sophistry, and wrangling, what one single person could have told us at the first, as soon as he was consulted? In all these different claims, made at different periods by the pontiff, though he generally succeeded at last, he never failed to encounter some opposition. It has, however, on this article of the pope's authority, been justly observed, that the advocates for it have been much more numerous than those for the authority of councils. The manner in which Æneas Sylvius, who was himself afterwards raised to the popedom, under the name of Pius II., accounted for this difference is strictly just: "Because," said he, "the popes have benefices to give, and the councils have none." Whether he would have returned the same answer after he had reached the summit of ecclesiastical preferment, may be justly made a question. Certain it is, that the pontiffs cannot be charged with want of attention to those who have stood forth as champions for their authority. Whereas there is hardly a motive, except a regard to truth, which can induce any one, in Roman Catholic countries, to defend the other side of the question. For on this article there are different opinions, even among Roman Catholics. This, however, is a point of which there has never been any decision that has been universally acquiesced in; and, indeed, on the footing

whereon matters now stand in that church, we may affirm, with great probability, that it will always remain undecided.

In the conclusion of my last lecture, I mentioned one great engine of papal policy, the exemptions granted by the pontiffs to particular ecclesiastics or communities, by which their subjection to the ordinary was dispensed with, and their dependence rendered immediate upon Rome. The legatine power, of which I have already spoken, was somewhat of the same nature, though it had a more plausible excuse. But exemptions were not limited to those who might be considered as a sort of agents for the pontiff, and employed to represent his person. He pretended a title to make such alterations in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of any country as he should judge proper, and particularly to exempt bishops, when he found it convenient, from the jurisdiction of the archbishop; priors and abbots, from that of the bishop.[b] This privilege came at length to be so far extended, that almost all the orders of regulars, and the universities, were taken, as it was termed, under the pope's immediate care and protection, that is, released from all subordination to the secular clergy, in whose dioceses they were situated, or might happen to reside.

For several ages after the church had been modelled on the plan of the civil government under Constantine, it was considered as a thing totally inadmissible, that a presbyter should withdraw his obedience from his bishop, a bishop from his metropolitan, or a metropolitan from his exarch or patriarch, where there was an ecclesiastic vested with that dignity. Accordingly, in the oriental churches, nothing of this sort was ever attempted. And, indeed, if the aristocratical form then given to the church had continued unviolated also in the west, such an attempt never had been made. But to say the truth, there was no possibility of supporting the monarchical form now given to the occidental churches, without some measure of this kind.

It is true, there had been established a subordination in all the clerical orders, from the pope downwards to the most menial officer in the church. The pope was the judge in the last resort, and claimed the exclusive title to give confirmation and investiture to all the dignitaries. Rome, by her exactions, as well as by the frequent recourse to her from all parts, for dis-

pensations, and the like trumpery, as we should call them, which had gradually obtained, and were then of the most serious consequence, had taken all imaginable care, that the several churches might not forget their subjection and dependance. Yet however sufficient this might have proved in a single kingdom or country, such as Italy, where the whole is more immediately under the eye of the governors, who can quickly get notice of, and provide against, a rising faction, before it bring any purpose to maturity, it is far from being sufficient in a wide-established empire. The primates, or archbishops, and even some of the wealthiest bishops, were like great feudatory lords. The owed a certain acknowledgment and duty to their liege-lord the pope; but the dependance of their inferior clergy, the suffragans and priests, like that of the vassals upon the barons, was immediately or directly on the prelates, and but indirectly and remotely upon the pope. As whilst the feudal government subsisted, the greater barons, in most kingdoms, with their train of vassals and dependants, by whom they were sure to be attended, found it an easy matter to rebel against their sovereign, and often to compel him to accept terms very humiliating to royalty, we may conclude, that a subordination pretty similar, in a sovereignty so much wider, could not have subsisted so long without some additional and powerful check. This was the more necessary in the present case, because, if there had arisen any factions or discontents among the more potent ecclesiastics against their spiritual lord, they would, in most cases, have had the assistance of the secular powers of the country, who, in spite of their superstition and ignorance, could not brook the reflection, that they were tributary to a foreign power, and a power which even claimed a sort of superintendency, or what was equivalent to a superintendency, over their judicatures and senates. The different claims set up by Rome, under the name of annats, tithes, peterspence, reservations, resignations, expectative graces, beside the casualties arising from pilgrimages, jubilees, indulgences, the dues of appeals, confirmations, dispensations, investitures, and the like, were so many sorts of tribute; nor could any nation which paid them to another, be said to be independent of the nation to which they were paid, or to possess sovereignty within itself. The right of appeals,

not only in all cases ecclesiastical, but in most cases wherein ecclesiastics were concerned, the many clerical privileges, of which Rome pretended to be both the guardian and the judge, laid a restraint both on the judiciary powers, and on the legislative. No wonder, then, that in the different states of Christendom, there should subsist, in the civil powers, an unextinguishable jealousy of Rome. As the pretensions of the latter were exorbitant, it was necessary that her resources for supporting her pretensions should be powerful.

Now the right of exemption I have been speaking of, proved exactly such a resource, being an effectual check on the secular, or established clergy. Accordingly when, in the council of Trent, an attempt was made by some bishops to have this abuse, as they accounted it, totally removed, the pope's legates, and all those who supported papal authority, saw but too clearly, that the scheme of those bishops, if they were gratified in it, would undermine the hierarchy, and make, as they expressed it, every bishop a pope in his own diocese; for when papal exemptions should be abrogated, every person would depend on his bishop, and none immediately on the pope; the consequence whereof would be, that people would soon cease altogether to recur to Rome. And this consequence had, doubtless, long ago taken place, had not the monastic orders come very opportunely, though, in some respect, accidentally, to support a fabric, become at length so unwieldy, as to appear in the most imminent danger of falling with its own weight. They proved as so many buttresses to it, which, though originally no part of the building, added amazingly to its strength.

As some of the largest and loftiest trees spring from very small seeds, so the most extensive and wonderful effects sometimes arise from very inconsiderable causes. Of the truth of this remark, we have a striking example in the monastic order, of the rise and progress of which I am now to speak. In times of persecution in the church's infancy, whilst the heathen yet raged, and the rulers took council together against the Lord, and against his anointed, many pious Christians, male and female, married and unmarried, justly accounting that no human felicity ought to come in competition with their fidelity to Christ, and modestly distrustful of their ability to persevere in

resisting the temptations wherewith they were incessantly harassed by their persecutors, took the resolution to abandon their possessions and worldly prospects, and, whilst the storm lasted, to retire to unfrequented places, far from the haunts of men, the married with or without their wives, as they agreed between them, that they might enjoy in quietness their faith and hope, and, without temptations to apostacy, employ themselves principally in the worship and service of their Maker. The cause was reasonable, and the motive praise-worthy. But the reasonableness arose solely from the circumstances. When the latter were changed, the former vanished, and the motive could no longer be the same. When there was not the same danger in society, there was not the same occasion to seek security in solitude. Accordingly, when the affairs of the church were put upon a different footing, and the profession of Christianity rendered perfectly safe, many returned without blame from their retirement, and lived like other men. Some, indeed, familiarized by time to a solitary and ascetic life, as it was called, at length preferred, through habit, what they had originally adopted through necessity. They did not waste their time in idleness; they supported themselves by their labour, and gave the surplus in charity. These likewise, without blame, remained in their retreat. But as it was purely to avoid temptation and danger that men first took refuge in such recesses, they never thought of fettering themselves by vows and engagements, because, by so doing, they must have exposed their souls to new temptations, and involved them in more, and perhaps greater dangers—a conduct very unlike that self-diffidence which certainly gave rise to so extraordinary a measure. This, therefore, was not monachism in the acceptation which the word came soon afterwards to receive, though, most probably, it suggested the idea of it, and may be justly considered as the first step towards it.

Such signal sacrifices have a lustre, which dazzles the eyes of the weak, and powerfully engages their imitation. The imitators, regardless of the circumstances which alone can render the conduct laudable, are often, by a strange depravity of understanding, led to consider it as the more meritorious, the less it is reasonable, and the more eligible, the less it is useful.

Nay, the spirit of the thing comes to be reversed. What at first, through humble diffidence, appeared necessary for avoiding the most imminent perils, is, through presumption, voluntarily adopted, though itself a source of perpetual peril. This I call *monachism*, according to the common acceptation of the term, of the progress of which I propose to give some account in the sequel.

Monachism, one of the most natural shoots of superstition, which, viewing the Deity as an object of terror rather than of love, regards it as the surest recommendation to his favour, that men become both burdens to society, and torments to themselves, and which, in some shape or other, may be found in all religions, was not, in its original state, even in the Christian church, considered as clerical; nor were the monks, as monks, accounted ecclesiastics of any order or denomination. They were no other than people who had bound themselves by a vow to renounce the world, to live in poverty and chastity, to confine themselves in respect of meat, and drink, and apparel, to what appeared merely necessary, and to devote their time to prayer and penance, reserving a small portion for works of industry. This way of life was, in its commencement, open to the laity of all conditions, and even of both sexes. But it was not open to the clergy, whose parochial duties were incompatible with such a seclusion from society. For it must be observed, that they had not then, as afterwards, any clergy merely nominal, or, to speak more properly, clergymen who were no ministers of religion, having no charge or office in the church of Christ.

This engagement, at first, led many unhappy fanatics to fly the world without necessity, to pass their lives in solitude, in remote and desert places, whence they were called *hermits*, from the Greek word ερημος, signifying desert, and monks, from μοναχος, denoting a solitary, from μονος, alone. They were also named anchorets, from αναχωρητης, a recluse. Every one of their ancient names, or titles, bears some vestige of this most distinguishing trait in their character, their secession from the world and society. They sheltered themselves accordingly in some rude cell or cavern, and subsisted on herbs and roots, the spontaneous productions of the soil, covering themselves with the

skins of beasts, for defending their bodies from the inclemencies of the weather.

But things did not remain long in this state. Give but time to fanaticism, and its fervours will subside. It was soon found convenient to relax this severity, to fall on a method of uniting society with retirement, property with indigence, and abstinence with indulgence. They then formed communities of men, who lived together in houses, called monasteries; where, though the individuals could acquire no property for themselves individually, there was no bounds to the acquisitions which might be made by the community. The female recluses also had their nunneries, and were named nuns. The word we have borrowed from the French *nonne*; its etymology I know not. Thus people fell, at length, on the happy expedient of reconciling loud pretences to sanctity and devotion, not only with laziness and spiritual pride, but with the most unbounded and shameless avarice; unbounded, because apparently in behalf of a public interest; and shameless, because under the mask of religion. And if they excluded some natural and innocent gratifications, the exclusion, as might be expected, often served to give birth to unnatural lusts. Hardly, one would think, can an imposition be too gross for deceiving a gross and superstitious people. So much was the world infatuated by the sanctimonious appearance of the recluses, (which consisted chiefly in some ridiculous singularity of garb) that men thought they could not more effectually purchase heaven to themselves, than by beggaring their offspring, and giving all they had to erect or endow monasteries; that is, to supply, with all the luxuries of life, those who were bound to live in abstinence, and to enrich those who had solemnly sworn, that they would be for ever poor, and who professed to consider riches as the greatest impediment in the road to heaven.

Large monasteries, both commodious and magnificent, more resembling the palaces of princes, than the rude cells which the primitive monks chose for their abode, were erected and endowed. Legacies and bequests, from time to time, flowed in upon them. Mistaken piety often contributed to the evil; but oftener superstitious profligacy. Oppression herself commonly judged, that to devote her wealth at last, when it could be kept

no longer, to a religious house, was a full atonement for all the injustice and extortion by which it had been amassed. But what can set in a stronger light the pitiable brutishness, to which the people were reduced by the reigning superstition, when men of rank and eminence, who had shown no partiality to any thing monastical, during their lives, gave express orders, when in the immediate views of death, that their friends should dress them out in monkish vestments, that in these they might die, and be buried, thinking, that the sanctity of their garb would prove a protection against a condemnatory sentence of the omniscient Judge. It is lamentable, it is humiliating to think, that we have unquestionable evidence, that human nature can be sunk so low. The ignorance and superstition of the times, by degrees, appropriated the term *religious* to those houses and their inhabitants.

I have often observed to you, how great an influence names and phrases have on the opinions of the generality of mankind. I should have remarked, that soon after things were put upon this footing, it was, on many accounts, judged expedient that the religious should be in orders. For the absurdity of shepherds without a flock, pastors without a charge, was an absurdity no longer; so much can men be familiarized by custom to use words with any latitude, and even to assign a meaning to them incompatible with their primitive use. Accordingly the companions in the monastery had commonly what was called priest's orders, and were termed *friars*, *fratres*, brethren; the head, or governor of the house, was denominated *abbot*, from a Syriac word, signifying father. Sometimes he was only a priest, and sometimes had episcopal ordination. Hence the distinction between mitred abbots, and unmitred. All these, on account of the rules to which they were bound by oath, were styled regular clergy, whereas those established as bishops and priests over the dioceses and parishes, were called secular. I know that some distinction is made also between *monks* and *friars*. Suffice it to observe at present, that the rules of the former are stricter than those of the latter.

When spacious monasteries were built, and supplied with a numerous fraternity, governed by an abbot of eminence and character, there often arose a jealousy between the abbot and

the bishop, in whose diocese the abbey was situated, and to whom, as things stood at first, the abbot and the friars owed spiritual subjection. Out of their mutual jealousies sprang umbrages, and these sometimes terminated in quarrels and injuries. In such cases, the abbots had the humiliating disadvantage, to be under the obligation of canonical obedience to him, as the ordinary of the place, with whom they were at variance.

That they might deliver themselves from these inconveniencies, real or pretended, and might be independent of their rivals, they applied to Rome, one after another, for a release from this slavery, as they called it, by being taken under the protection of St. Peter; that is, under immediate subjection to the pope. The proposal was, with avidity, accepted at Rome. That politic court saw immediately, that nothing could be better calculated for supporting papal power. Whoever obtains privileges is obliged, in order to secure his privileges, to maintain the authority of the granter.

Very quickly, all the monasteries, great and small, abbeys, priories, and nunneries, were exempted. The two last were inferior sorts of monasteries, and often subordinate to some abbey. Even the chapters of cathedrals, consisting mostly of regulars, on the like pretexts, obtained exemption. Finally, whole orders, those called the congregations of Cluni and Cistertio, Benedictines, and others, were exempted. This effectually procured a prodigious augmentation to the pontifical authority, which now came to have a sort of disciplined troops in every place, defended and protected by the papacy, who, in return, were its defenders and protectors, serving as spies on the bishops as well as on the secular powers. Afterwards the mendicant orders, or begging friars, though the refuse of the whole, the tail of the beast, as Wickliff termed them, whereof the Roman pontiff is the head, obtained still higher privileges, for they were not only exempted every where from episcopal authority, but had also a title to build churches wherever they pleased, and to administer the sacraments in these independently of the ordinary of the place. Nay, afterwards, in the times immediately preceding the convention of the aforesaid council, things had proceeded so far, that any private clerk could, at a small expence, obtain an exemption from the superintendency of his

bishop, not only in regard to correction, but in relation to orders, which he might receive from whomsoever he pleased, so as to have no connection with the bishop of any kind.

What had made matters still worse was, that the whole business of teaching the Christian people had, by this time, fallen into the hands of the regulars. The secular clergy had long since eased themselves of the burden. Preaching and reading the sacred scriptures properly made no part of the public offices of religion. It is true, it was still the practice to read, or rather chant, some passages from the gospels and epistles, in an unknown tongue: for all in the western churches must now, for the sake of uniformity, to which every thing was sacrificed, be in Latin. Now, for some centuries before the council of Trent, Latin had not been the native language of any country or city in the world, not even of Italy or of Rome. That such lessons were not understood by the people, was thought an objection of no consequence at all. They were not the less fitted for making a part of the solemn unmeaning mummery of the liturgic service. The bishops and priests having long disused preaching, probably at first through laziness, seem to have been considered at last as not entitled to preach; for, on the occasion above-mentioned, they very generally complained, that the charge of teaching was taken out of their hands, and devolved upon the friars, especially the mendicants, who were a sort of itinerant preachers, licensed by the court of Rome.

How the friars discharged this trust, we may learn from the most authentic histories, which sufficiently show, that the representations of the scope of their preaching, made by the bishops in that council, were not exaggerated, when they said, that the end of their teaching was not to edify the people, but to collect alms from them, either for themselves or for their convents; that, in order to attain this purpose, they solely considered not what was for the soul's health, but what would please, and flatter, and soothe the appetites of the hearers, and thereby bring most profit to themselves; so that the people, instead of learning the doctrine of Christ, are but amused, said they, with mere novelties and vanities. But whatever be in this account, the pope could not fail to draw an immense advantage from this circumstance, that the instruction of the people was

now almost entirely in the hands of his own creatures. How great, then, must be the advantage, of a similar, but still more important kind, resulting from the exemptions granted to universities, who being taken, as it were, under his immediate patronage, were engaged from interest to instil principles of obedience to the pope into the minds of the youth, of whose education they had the care.

Now if the chain of dependance of the secular clergy on the head, be similar to that which subsists in a civil, particularly a feudatory constitution, where the obligation of every inferior through the whole subordination of vassalage is considered as being much stronger to the immediate superior than to the sovereign, the dependance of the regulars may justly be represented by the military connection which subsists with the sovereign in a standing army. There the tie of every soldier and subaltern is much stronger to the king than to his captain or his colonel. If, then, the secular clergy, in Romish countries, may be called the pope's civil officers, the regulars are his guards. This matter was too well understood by the friends of Rome, who were the predominant party in the council of Trent, ever to yield to any alteration here that could be called material. Some trifling changes, however, were made, in order to conciliate those who were the keenest advocates for reforming the discipline of the church, or at least to silence their clamours. The exemptions given to chapters were limited a little. The bishops were made governors of the nunneries within their bishoprics, not as bishops of the diocese, but as the pope's delegates; and friars, who resided in cloisters, and were guilty of any scandalous excess without the precincts of the cloister, if the superior of the convent, whether abbot or prior, refused, when required, to chastise them within a limited time, might be punished by the bishop.

I have now traced the principal causes, which co-operated to the erection of the hierarchy, and shall, in what remains to be observed on the subject, in a few more lectures, consider both the actual state of church power, and the different opinions concerning it at the time of the council of Trent, which shall terminate our inquiries into the rise and establishment of the hierarchy.

LECTURE XX.

I HAVE now, in a course of lectures, endeavoured, with all possible brevity, to lay before you the principal arts, by which the Roman hierarchy was raised, and have also pointed out some of the most remarkable events and occurrences, which facilitated the erection. It is chiefly the progress of ecclesiastical dominion, that I have traced. The papal usurpation on the secular powers, though I have explained its source in the erection of episcopal tribunals, and glanced occasionally at its progress, I have, for several reasons, not so expressly examined. One is, it does not so immediately affect the subject of the hierarchy, with which I considered myself as principally concerned. Another is, that the usurpation here is, if possible, still more glaring to every attentive reader of church history, and therefore stands less in need of being pointed out. A third reason is, that though the claims of superiority over the civil powers, formerly advanced by Rome with wonderful success, have never been abandoned, but are, as it were, reserved in petto for a proper occasion, yet, at present, the most sublime of their pretensions are little minded, and are hardly, as affairs now stand in Europe, capable of doing hurt. Nothing can be better founded than the remark, that the thunders of the Vatican will kindle no conflagration, except where there are combustible materials. At present there is hardly a country in Christendom so barbarously superstitious (I do not except even Spain and Portugal) as to afford a sufficient quantity of those materials for raising a combustion. We never hear now of the excommunication and deposition of princes, of kingdoms laid under an interdict, and of the erection and the disposal of kingdoms by the pope. Such is the difference of times, that these things, which were once the great engines of raising papal dominion, would now serve only to render it contemptible. The foundation of all is opinion, which is of great consequence in every polity, but is

every thing in an ecclesiastic polity. To the above reasons, I shall add a fourth. It is only a part, and not the greater part neither, of the Roman Catholics, who acknowledge that the pope, as pope, or bishop, has any kind of authority in secular matters over the civil powers. They make but a party comparatively small, who carry the rights of the papacy so far as to include therein a paramount authority over all the powers of the earth, spiritual and temporal. A gentleman of the house of commons, in a celebrated speech on the affairs of America, in the beginning of the American revolt, speaking of the religious profession of those colonies, denominated it the protestantism of the protestant religion. In imitation of the manner of this orator, I shall style the system of that high-flying party in the church of Rome, the popery of the popish religion. It is the very quintessence of papistry. Nay, we have some foundation even from themselves for naming it so; for those who hold it are, even among Roman Catholics, distinguished by the name *pontificii*, or *papists*, and mostly consist of the people and clergy of Italy, the immediate dependencies on the papal see, and the different orders of regulars. It was in a particular manner the system strenuously supported by the order of Jesuits now abolished. The doctrine of the more moderate Roman Catholics, which is that of almost all the laity, and the bulk of the secular clergy in all European countries, except Italy and its islands, is unfavourable to those high pretensions of the Roman pontiff. But even these are far from being entirely unanimous in regard to the spiritual power and jurisdiction, which they ascribe to him. The bounding line, which distinguishes the civil from the ecclesiastic, is one of the arcana of that church's policy, and therefore never to be precisely ascertained. I shall then, in order to give you some idea ere I conclude, of the sublimity and plenitude of the ecclesiastic power, claimed in behalf of his holiness over the ministers of the church, by the advocates of that see, and to give you some notion of their manner of supporting those claims, exhibit to you the substance of a speech on episcopal jurisdiction, delivered in the council of Trent, by father Laines, general of the Jesuits, translated from the Italian of Fra Poalo Sarpi. Afterwards I shall take a little notice of the encroachments made on the civil powers.

"Lainez," says that historian, "spoke more than two hours "with great vehemence, in a distinct, but magisterial tone. "The argument of his discourse consisted of two parts. The "first was employed in proving, that the right of jurisdiction "over Christ's kingdom here had been given entirely to the "Roman pontiff, and not a single particle of it to any other in "the church. The second contained his answers to all the ar-"guments on the opposite side, adduced in former meetings.

"The substance was, that there is a great difference, nay, a "contrariety between the church of Christ and civil communi-"ties, inasmuch as these have an existence previous to the for-"mation of their government, and are thereby free, having in "them originally, as in its fountain, all the jurisdiction, which, "without divesting themselves of it, they communicate to ma-"gistrates. But the church did neither make herself, nor form "her own government. It was Christ the prince and monarch "who first established the laws whereby she should be govern-"ed; then assembled his people, and, as scripture expresses "it, built the church. Thus she is born a slave, without "any sort of liberty, power, or jurisdiction, but every where, "and in every thing, subjected. In proof of this he quoted "passages of scripture, wherein the gathering of the church is "compared to the sowing of a field, the drawing of a net to "land, and the rearing of an edifice; adding, that Christ is "said to have come into the world to assemble his faithful peo-"ple, to gather his sheep, to instruct them both by doctrine "and by example. Then he subjoined; the first and principal "foundation whereon Christ built the church was Peter and "his succession, according to the word which he said to him, "*Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church*; "which rock, though some of the fathers have understood to "be Christ himself, and others the faith in him, or the confes-"sion of the faith, it is nevertheless a more catholic exposition "to understand it of Peter himself, who, in Hebrew or Syriac, "is called *Cephas*, that is, Rock. He affirmed, in like man-"ner, that while Christ lived in mortal flesh, he governed the "church with despotic and monarchical government, and leav-"ing this earth, he left the same form, constituting St. Peter "and the successors of St. Peter, his vicars successively, to ad-

"minister it, as it had been exercised by him, giving them "plenary power and jurisdiction, and subjecting to them the "church in the way wherein it is subjected to him. This he "proved from what we are told of Peter, because to him alone "were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and by conse- "quence, power to admit and exclude, which is jurisdiction; "and to him alone it was said, *Feed*, that is, rule *my sheep*, "silly animals, which have no part, no choice whatever in con- "ducting themselves. These two things, namely, to be porter "and pastor, being perpetual offices, it was necessary that they "should be conferred on a perpetual person, that is, not on the "first only, but on the whole succession. Hence the Roman "pontiff, beginning from St. Peter to the end of the world, is "true and absolute despot, with plenary power and jurisdic- "tion; and the church is subject to him as it was to Christ. "And as when his divine majesty governed it, it could not be "said, that any of the faithful had the smallest power or juris- "diction, all being in total subjection, the same may be said "in all perpetuity. Thus we ought to understand these de- "clarations, that the church is a sheepfold, that it is a king- "dom, and what St. Cyprian says, that the episcopate is one, "and that a part thereof is held by every bishop; that is, that "the whole undivided power is placed in one single pastor, "who apportions and communicates it to associates in the mini- "stry, as exigencies require; and that, in allusion to this, St. "Cyprian compares the apostolic see to the root, the head, the "fountain, the sun; showing, by these comparisons, that the "jurisdiction is essentially in her alone; in others, only by de- "rivation, or participation. And this is the meaning of that "most usual expression of antiquity, that Peter and the pon- "tiff possess the plenitude of power—others do but participate "in the cure. And that he is the sole shepherd, is demon- "strated by the words of Christ, who said that he had other "sheep, which he would gather, that there might be but one "sheepfold, and one shepherd. The shepherd spoken of here "cannot be Christ himself, because it could not be said, in the "future tense, that there shall be one shepherd, he being al- "ready the shepherd. It must, therefore, be understood of "another sole shepherd, to be constituted after him, who can be

" no other than Peter with his succession. He remarked here, " that the precept to feed the flock, occurs but twice in scrip- " ture, once in the singular number, when Christ said to Peter, " *Feed my sheep;* once in the plural, when Peter said to others, " *Feed the flocks assigned to you.* Now if the bishops had " received any jurisdiction from Christ, it would be equal in " them all, which would destroy the difference between patri- " arch, archbishop, and bishop; besides, the pope could not " intermeddle with that authority, either by diminishing it, or " by removing it entirely, as he cannot intermeddle with the " power of orders which is from God. Wherefore the greatest " caution is necessary here, lest by making the institution of " bishops *de jure divino,* they should subvert the hierarchy, " and introduce into the church an obligarchy, or rather, an " anarchy. He added, To the end that Peter might govern " the church well, so that the gates of hell should not prevail " against her, Christ, a little before his death, prayed effica- " ciously, that his faith might not fail, and ordained him to con- " firm the brethren; in other words, he gave him the privilege " of infallibility, in judging of faith, manners, and the whole of " religion, obliging all the church to obey him, and stand firm " in whatsoever should be decreed by him. He concluded, " that this is the true foundation of the Christian doctrine, and " the rock whereon the church is built. He proceeded to cen- " sure those who held that bishops have received any power " from Christ; an opinion subversive of the privilege of the " Roman church, whose pontiff is head of the church universal, " and the only vicar of Christ upon earth. It is very well " known, that by the ancient canon, *omnes sive patriarchæ,* &c. " it is enacted, that whoever takes away the rights of other " churches, commits injustice, but whoever takes away the pri- " vileges of the Roman church, is a heretic. He added, that " it is an absolute contradiction to maintain, that the pontiff is " head of the church, and its government is monarchical; and " to affirm, that there is either power or authority in it, which " is received from others, and not derived from him.

" In refuting the arguments on the opposite side, he advan- " ced, that, according to the order instituted by Christ, the " apostles must have been ordained bishops, not by Christ, but

"by Peter, receiving jurisdiction from him alone; an opinion, "he said, extremely probable, and held by many catholic doctors. Others, however, who maintain that the apostles were "ordained bishops by Christ, add, that his divine majesty, in "so doing, exercised, by prevention, Peter's office, doing for "once what belonged to Peter to do, giving to the apostles "himself that power which they ought to have received from "Peter, just as God took of the spirit of Moses, and imparted "it to the seventy judges, so that it was as much as if they had "been ordained by Peter, and had received all authority from "him; and therefore they continued subject to Peter, in regard to the places and modes of exercising their authority. "And though we do not read that Peter corrected them, it "was not through defect of power, but because they exercised "their office properly, and so did not need correction. Whoever reads the celebrated canon, *Ita Dominus*, will be assured, "that every catholic ought to believe this; and thus the bishops, who are successors of the apostles, receive the whole "from the successor of Peter. He observed, also, that the "bishops are not called successors of the apostles, unless, as "being in their places, in the way that a bishop succeeds his "predecessors, and not as being ordained by them. He replied to what some had inferred, that the pope might then "leave off making bishops, choosing to be the only bishop himself. He admitted, that ordination is divine, that in the "church there is a multitude of bishops, coadjutors of the pontiff, and therefore that the pontiff is obliged to preserve the "order; but that there is a great difference between saying "that a thing is *de jure divino*, and that it is appointed of God. "Things instituted *de jure divino*, are perpetual, and depend "on God alone, at every time, both universally and particularly. Thus baptism, and all the other sacraments, wherein "God operates singularly in each particular, are *de jure divino*. "Thus the Roman pontiff is of God. For when one dies, the "keys do not remain with the church, for they were not given "to her. But when the new pope is created, God immediately "gives them to him. But it happens otherwise in things barely of divine appointment; inasmuch as from God comes only "the universal, whereas the particulars are executed by men.

" Thus St. Paul says, that princes and temporal powers are or-" dained of God; that is, from him alone comes the universal " precept, that there should be princes; nevertheless, the par-" ticulars are made by civil laws. In the same manner bishops " are ordained of God; and St. Paul says, they are placed by " the Holy Ghost for the government of the church, but not " *de jure divino.* The pope, however, cannot abolish the uni-" versal precept for making bishops in the church, because it is " from God: but each particular bishop, being only *de jure* " *canonico*, may, by pontifical authority, be removed. And to " the objection, that the bishops would be delegates, and not " ordinaries, he answered: It behoveth us to distinguish juris-" diction into fundamental and derived, and the derived into " delegated and ordinary. In civil polities, the fundamental is " in the prince, the derived is in all the magistrates. And in " these, ordinaries are different from delegates, because they " receive the authority diversely, though they all derive equally " from the same sovereignty; but the difference consists in " this, that the ordinaries are by perpetual laws, and with suc-" cession: the others have single authority, either personal or " casual. The bishops, therefore, are ordinaries, being insti-" tuted by pontifical laws, dignities of perpetual succession in " the church. He added, that those passages wherein Christ " seems to give authority to the church, as that wherein he " says, that it is *the pillar and basis of the truth*, and that other, " *Let him who will not hear the church be to thee as a heathen* " *and a publican*, are all to be understood solely in respect of " its head, which is the pope. For this reason the church is " infallible, because it has an infallible head. And thus he is " separated from the church, who is separated from the pope its " head. As to what had been urged, that the council could " have no authority from Christ, if none of the bishops had " any, he answered, that this was not to be regarded as an ob-" jection, but as a certain truth, being a very clear and neces-" sary consequence of the truly catholic doctrine he had demon-" strated; nay, added he, if each of the bishops in council be " fallible, it cannot be denied, that all of them together are fal-" lible; and if the authority of the council arose from the au-" thority of the bishops, no council could ever be called gene-

"ral, wherein the number of those present, is incomparably less "than the number of those that are absent. He mentioned, "that in that very council under Paul III. the most moment-"ous articles concerning the canonical books, the authority of "translations, the equality of tradition in scripture, had been "decided by a number less than fifty: that if multitude gave "authority, these decisions had none at all. But as a number "of prelates, convened by the pontiff, for the purpose of con-"stituting a general council, however few, derives not the name "and efficacy of being general, from any other cause than the "pope's designation, so likewise he is the sole source of its au-"thority. Therefore, if it issue precepts, or anathemas, these "have no effect, unless in virtue of the pontiff's future confir-"mation. Nor can the councils bind any by its anathemas, "further than they shall be enforced by the confirmation. "And when the synod says, that it is assembled in the Holy "Ghost, it means no more than that the fathers are assembled, "by the pope's summons, to discuss matters, which, when ap-"proved by him, will be decreed by the Holy Ghost. Other-"wise, how could it be said, that a decree is made by the Holy "Ghost, which may, by pontifical authority, be invalidated, or "has need of further confirmation; and therefore, in councils, "however numerous, when the pope is present, he alone de-"crees, nor does the council add any thing but its approbation; "that is, it receives. Accordingly, the authentic phrase has "always been, *Sacro approbante concilio*; nay, in determina-"tions of the greatest weight, as was the deposition of the em-"peror Frederic II. in the general council of Lyons, Innocent "IV., a most wise pontiff, refused the approbation of the synod, "lest any should imagine it necessary: he thought it enough "to say, *sacro presente concilio*. Nor ought we hence to con-"clude, that a council is superfluous. It is convened for the "sake of stricter inquisition, easier persuasion, and for giving "the members some notion of the question. And when it "judges, it acts by virtue of the pontifical authority, derived "from the divine, given it by the pope. For these reasons, "the good doctors have subjected the authority of the council "to the authority of the pontiff, as totally dependent thereon. "Without this, it has neither the assistance of the Holy Spirit,

" nor infallibility, nor the power of binding the church. It has " nothing but what is conceded to it by him alone to whom " Christ said, *Feed my sheep.*"

Such was the famous discourse of Lainez, in which, I must own, we have much greater reason to admire Jesuitical impudence than even Jesuitical sophistry. So many bold assertions, some of which are flatly contradicted by sacred writ, and others by the most unquestionable records of history, required a man of no common spirit, or, as scripture strongly expresses it, who had a brow of brass, to advance them. Is it possible, that he himself was so ignorant as to believe what he advanced? Or could he presume so far upon the ignorance of his audience, as to think of making them believe it? Or did he imagine that his hearers would be so overborne by his eloquence, his assuming tone and dictatorial manner, as to be thrown into a kind of stupor, and rendered incapable of discovering the notorious falsehoods with which his oration was stuffed? Passing the contradictions to holy writ, (a book with which the divines of his day were but beginning to be acquainted,) was it prudent to ascribe a power to the papacy, not only unheard of in former ages, but which popes themselves had explicitly disclaimed? Nothing can be more express than the words of Gregory, surnamed the Great, who, though remarkably tenacious of the honours of his see, says, in arguing against the Constantinopolitan patriarch, for assuming the title of universal bishop, " Si unus episcopus vocatur universalis, universa ecclesia cor" ruit, si unus universus cadet." If one should fall, the universal church falls with him. Here, taking it for self-evident, that all bishops, without exception, are fallible, he infers the absurdity there is in any one calling himself universal. Again, " Absit a cordibus Christianorum nomen istud blasphemiæ, in " quo omnium sacerdotum honor adimitur, dum ab uno sibi " dementer arrogatur;" where he no less plainly arraigns the impious usurpation of any one, who, by claiming such a superiority, would strip all other priests of their dignity, and madly arrogate the whole to himself. Was it well-judged to misrepresent so common an author as Cyprian in so flagrant a manner, and make him compare the apostolic (that is, in the Jesuit's dialect, the Roman) see to the root, the head, the

fountain, the sun, in a passage where Cyprian mentions no see whatever, but speaks solely of the necessity of union with the universal church? Cyprian, in writing to popes, and of them, uniformly shows, that he considered them as, in respect of their ministry, entirely on a foot of equality with himself, denominating them brethren, colleagues, and fellow-bishops. Whether he paid an implicit deference to their judgment, let the dispute he had with Pope Stephen, about the rebaptization of those who had been baptized by heretics, testify. By this firmness, he incurred excommunication from the pope; and, in this state he died, though now worshipped as a saint and a martyr by the very church which excommunicated him.

But not to enter farther into particulars, was it judicious in Lainez to trust so much to the ignorance of the whole assembly, as not only to quote such men as Cyprian, an eminent and inflexible opposer of papal arrogance, but to talk of the pope's power in convoking councils, and confirming their decrees, as what had always obtained in the church, and was essential to the very being of a council, when every smatterer in ecclesiastic history, and in ancient ecclesiastic writers, must have known, that this practice was comparatively recent? Passing the custom of the earlier ages, when the imperial authority was used, was it already quite forgotten, that, in the very preceding century, the council of Pisa was not convened by any pontiff, and yet proceeded so far as to try and depose two pretenders to the popedom, and elect a third in their stead? Or, had they now no knowledge of the council of Constance, which was still later, and, in like manner, deposed two claimants, one of them the pope, who had convoked it, and, after accepting the resignation of a third, proceeded to the election of a fourth? Or could it be imagined, that the whole audience was so stupid, as not to be sensible that, if those proceedings at Constance were null, there was no vacancy made by the deposition of John and Benedict; consequently, that the council's election of Martin, following thereon, was null; consequently, that Pius IV., the pope then reigning, had no right, as he derived his title lineally from an usurper, who, by creating cardinals whilst he himself was destitute of authority, had perpetuated, in his successors, the failure of his own title; and consequently, that there was

an irreparable breach made in the succession to the popedom? Was it possible, that they should not perceive, that the subversion of the authority of that council, an authority claimed over popes, was the subversion of the title of Martin V., and that the subversion of the title of Martin V., was the subversion of the title of all succeeding popes to the end of the world.

How curiously does Lainez argue from the metaphor of *sheep*, that the Christian people, indeed the whole church, clergy as well as laity, (the pope, the one shepherd of the one sheepfold, alone excepted,) have no more judgment in directing themselves than brute beasts. He does not, indeed, so cleverly account how that superior sort of being, the pope, can think of choosing any of these irrational animals, as partners in the ministry with him, to assist in guiding and directing their fellow-brutes. I admire the wonderful fetch by which he makes Jesus Christ, when he commissioned the twelve apostles, act in ordaining eleven of them, (though no distinction is pointed out in the history,) merely in the name of Peter, and as Peter's substitute; borrowing back, for this purpose, part of the authority exclusively conferred on him. He is, indeed, greatly at a loss, (these deputy-apostles, or apostles of the apostle Peter, unluckily behaved so properly,) to find an instance of Peter's so much boasted authority in judging and correcting them. But we are at no loss to find an instance wherein, on Peter's behaving improperly, Paul not only opposed, but publicly and sharply rebuked him. The passage well deserves your notice. Ye will find it in the epistle to the Galatians, ii. 11, &c. *When Peter was come to Antioch*, says Paul, *I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed: for before that certain came from Judea, he did eat with the Gentiles, but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter, before them all*, If thou, being a Jew, *livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?* Was this a treatment from a mere delegate to his principal, nay more, from one of the

sheep, those stupid irrational animals, to his shepherd, (for mark, that according to Lainez, Peter was the sole shepherd; they all, in respect of him, were sheep,) from a fallible member of the church to Christ's only vicar, to the infallible head and pastor? What matter of triumph would there have been here to the Romanist, if the case had been reversed, and Peter had, in a manner, to appearance, so authoritative, judged and rebuked Paul? Our ears would have been stunned with the repetition of a demonstration, so irrefragable, of the supremacy of Peter, and consequently of Rome. Yet there would have been no real ground of triumph had it been so. If any regard is to be had to the accounts of inspiration, it is manifest, that none of them, though apostles, were infallible; and that as they were all, by their vocation, brethren and equals, and expressly called so by their master, in a passage wherein he prohibits their either giving or assuming a superiority one over another, it was their duty to correct one another in love, and not permit a brother unadmonished to persist in any practice truly blame-worthy. Passing, however, the article of correction, of which it appears, that Peter, the only infallible apostle, was the only person of the society that ever stood in need; what evidence have we, of any authority, in other respects, exercised by Peter over the sacred college? Does he ever call them together, to assign them their several charges, and to give them instructions in relation to the duties of their office? or, Do they ever have recourse to him for the proper information in regard to these? Not a vestige to this purpose, do we find in the Acts of the Apostles, where, if there had been such a thing, it could hardly have been omitted; nor is there the least suggestion, that points this way, in any of the epistles. Nay, not one of the apostles do we find sent on any mission whatsoever by him. We have, indeed, as I had occasion to remark in a former discourse, a notable instance, in which Peter and John were sent on a mission by the other apostles, who were at Jerusalem at the time, but not a single example of an apostle, who received either direction or orders of any kind from Peter.

But it would be trifling to enter more into particulars. Who sees not that, by this Jesuit's way of commenting, not only there is no evidence, that any powers were conferred on the

other apostles, or on the church, but it would have been impossible for the inspired writers themselves to give us evidence that there were? For, however clear and decisive their expressions might have been, this brief reply would have cut them down at once: "All such passages are to be understood solely in respect of the church's head, which is the pope." Suffice it then to say of the whole piece, as we may say with the greatest justice, that it is a mass of falsehoods and chicanery. Some things are affirmed in opposition to the fullest evidence, many things are assumed without any evidence, and nothing is proved.

But it is of some consequence to consider the reception it met with in the council, as this consideration will serve to show the different sentiments which prevailed at that time among Roman Catholics, in relation to the hierarchy, and ecclesiastical dominion. This, together with some remarks on the present state of the papacy, shall be reserved for the subject of another lecture.

LECTURE XXI.

In my last lecture, in order to give you some idea of the sublimity and plenitude of the spiritual power and prerogatives, claimed in behalf of his holiness, by the partizans of the see of Rome, and, at the same time, to give you some taste of their manner of supporting their claims from scripture and antiquity, I exhibited to you the substance of a speech on episcopal jurisdiction, delivered by the Jesuit Laines in the council of Trent. I made also a few strictures on his mode of probation. But as it is of more consequence, for understanding the present state of parties and opinions in the Romish church, to know the reception which the Jesuit's sentiments met with in the council, I reserved this for a principal part of the subject of my present lecture. I shall therefore begin with it.

" Of all the orations that had yet been delivered in the council, there was not one," says our historian, " more commended and more blamed, according to the different dispositions of the hearers, than was this of Lainez. By the pontifician, or papists, (so do even Roman Catholics term the minions of Rome, and sticklers for every claim made by the papacy) it was cried up as most learned, bold, and well-founded; by others it was condemned as adulatory, and by some even as heretical. Many showed that they were offended by the asperity of his censures, and were determined, in the following congregations, (so the meetings holden for deliberation and debate were named) to attack his speech on every occasion, and point out the ignorance and temerity which it betrayed.

" The bishop of Paris having, when he should have given his sentiments, been confined by sickness, said to every body who came to see him, that when there should be a congregation that he could attend, he would deliver his opinion against that doctrine without reserve, a doctrine which, unheard of in former ages, had been invented about fifty years before by

"Gaetan, in hope of being made a cardinal, and had been censured, on its first publication, by the theological college in Paris, called the Sorbon, a doctrine which, instead of representing the church as the heavenly kingdom, agreeably to the denomination given her in scripture, exhibits her as not a spiritual kingdom, but a temporal tyranny, taking from her the title of the chaste spouse of Christ, and making her the slave and prostitute of one man."

It was not difficult to discover what man he alluded to. Indeed, methinks, this Parisian theologist was not far from the opinion of those protestants, who interpret the whore of Babylon, in the Apocalypse, to be the church of Rome. He plainly acknowledges, that the accounts given of this church by the pope's partizans, are exactly descriptive of such a character. And may we not justly say, that a church, which could tamely bear such treatment from Lainez, or any of the creatures of papal despotism, deserved to be branded with the disgraceful appellation? Or may we not rather say, that her bearing it in the manner she did, was a demonstrative proof, that the representation, given of her state at that time, was just? It may, indeed, excite some wonder, that the above-named jesuit should have chosen to adopt a style on this subject, so directly contradictory to the style of holy writ. Our Lord promises freedom to his disciples. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." By convincing your judgment, it shall powerfully operate upon your will, and make your duty to become your choice. Herein lies the most perfect freedom. Again, "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." The service of his disciples is not like that of a slave by constraint, arising solely from fear; it is entirely voluntary, proceeding from the noblest of motives, *love*. He therefore calls them not servants, so much as friends, and treats them as such, communicating his purposes to them, and engaging them, not by coercive methods, but by persuasion. His law is, for this reason styled a law of liberty: and those who receive it are required to act *as free, yet not using their liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the* willing *servants of God.* Not the most distant hint has he any where given of his people's slavery. But Lainez tells you, judging of the conduct of Christ from that of

Rome, the very worst model he could have taken, that Jesus Christ has made his church (that is, the whole community of his disciples) a mere slave, that has not any sort of liberty, but is every where, and in every thing, subjected to the dominion of an absolute despot. So different is the language of this son of Loyola from that of the Son of God. Yet not more different than is the spirit of the different religious institutions which they teach.

But to return to the bishop's remarks, "Lainez," said he, "maintains, that there is only one bishop instituted by Christ, "and that the other bishops have no power unless dependently "on him. This is as much as to say, that one only is bishop, "the rest are but his vicars, removeable at his pleasure. For "his own part, he acknowledged, he wished to rouse the whole "council, to consider how the episcopal authority, so much de- "pressed, could be preserved from annihilation, since every new "congregation of regulars, which springs up, gives it a violent "shock. The bishops had maintained their authority entire "till the year 1050." With this good prelate's leave, their authority was, by the gradual encroachments of Rome, long before that period greatly reduced. Her supreme jurisdiction, both as lawgiver, and as judge, were, ere then, pretty firmly established. Her orders and canons were generally, throughout the western churches, promulged and obeyed: recourse was had to her for dispensations, for confirmation, and collation, in ecclesiastic offices, and for judgment by appeals. But these usurpations were, long before the time of this council, acquiesced in as rights. An acquiescence, thus far, may be considered as at least virtually comprehended in the solemn oath of fidelity, subjection, and obedience, to the pope, exacted of, and given by, prelates immediately before their consecration. In regard to these, therefore, however objectionable, they had precluded themselves, and could not decently object to them. Whereas, those claims, to which the Parisian alluded, being more recent, though they had surmounted the force of opposition, had not yet survived the murmurs and discontents which the introduction of them had created.

I resume the prelate's account of the matter; "It was then "in 1050, that the Cluniac and Cistertian congregations, and "others, which arose in that century, gave a signal blow to

"the episcopal order: many functions, proper and essential to "bishops, being, by their means, devolved upon Rome. But "after the year 1200, when the mendicants arose, almost the "whole exercise of episcopal authority has been taken away, "and given to them by privilege. At length, this new con-"gregation, (the Jesuits) a society of yesterday, which is scarce-"ly either secular or regular, as the university of Paris, eight "years ago, knowing it to be dangerous in matters of faith, "pernicious to the peace of the church, and destructive of mo-"nachism, has well observed, (this congregation, I say) that it "might outdo its predecessors, has attempted to subvert entire-"ly episcopal jurisdiction, denying it to be from God, and want-"ing it to be acknowledged as from men, and therefore preca-"rious and mutable.

"These things," says the historian, "repeated by the bi-"shop to different persons, as occasion offered, moved many "others to reflect, who had at first given little attention to the "subject. But among those who had any knowledge of his-"tory, not a little was spoken concerning that observation, *sacro* "*præsente concilio*, which appeared in all the canonical codes, "but not having been attended to, seemed new to every body. "Some approved the Jesuit's interpretation, some interpreted "it in a sense quite contrary, that the council had refused to "approve that sentence; others, taking another rout, argued, "that as the matter treated on that occasion was temporal, and "the contentions were worldly, one could not infer from its "procedure, in that instance, that the same thing ought to be "done in treating matters of faith, and ecclesiastic rites; espe-"cially, when it is considered, that in the first council of the "apostles at Jerusalem, which ought to be our rule and exem-"plar, the decree was not made by Peter, either in presence of "the council, or with its approbation, but was entitled the "epistle, with the addition of the names of three degrees, as-"sembled in that congregation, apostles, elders, and brethren; "and Peter, unnamed, was, without prerogative or distinction, "included in the first degree, apostles; an example which, in "respect of antiquity and divine authority, ought to discredit all "the examples, on the opposite side, that can be deduced from "subsequent times."

I have observed how degrading and dishonourable, according to the bishop, the picture was which Lainez had drawn of the church of Christ, and taken notice of the strong resemblance, though perfectly unintended, which, from the Parisian's comment, appears, in the Jesuit's sentiments, to what was then affirmed by their adversaries, the protestants, in regard to the church of Rome. It may not be improper to observe here, that even an avowed coincidence with these, if we may judge from the language they used, was at that time not unfrequent in some of those who, though greatly dissatisfied, never chose to separate from the Romish communion. It may not be improper to give one specimen of the complaints then so common, in order to show how great the dissatisfaction was at the torrent of corruption which universally prevailed, and to suggest what was the general opinion in regard to the fountain whence the prevalent corruption flowed. Among many instances that might be given, I shall select one of a very public nature, the speech pronounced by the French ambassador Ferrier, when he produced his credentials in the above-named council. Let it be remarked, that France was then involved in a civil war between the Roman Catholics and the Hugonots, the name then given to the reformed in that country, by their enemies. After a preamble, in which he expatiates on the pious intentions of the king, his master, his great merits in respect of the zeal he had shown for the catholic church, and even for the dignity and authority of the sovereign pontiff; he, on the matter, acknowledges, that it is this zeal alone which occasioned all the intestine broils wherewith his reign was at that time disturbed; for that if he had no further aim, than securing due obedience to his own civil authority, and maintaining the peace of the kingdom, every thing might be settled to his satisfaction in three days. In this his excellency gave a more honourable testimony to the dispositions of the protestants, in his country, than probably he had intended. At least, he showed that the aggression and persecution were entirely on the other side, and that the protestants, whether right or wrong in resisting, acted merely on the defensive. When coming towards a conclusion, after many free and spirited things, he adds, "The most Chris-"tian king demands of this council nothing but what all the

"Christian world demands, what the great Constantine de-"manded of the fathers of the Nicene council. His majesty's "requests are all comprehended in the sacred scriptures, the "ancient councils of the catholic church, the old constitutions, "decrees, and canons, of the pontiffs and fathers. He demands "of those whom Christ hath constituted judges, the entire re-"storation of the catholic church, not by a decree in loose and "general terms, but according to the form of the express words "of that perpetual and divine edict, against which usurpation "or prescription can have no place; so that those good ordi-"nances, which the devil has violently robbed us of, and long "concealed, may at length return, as from captivity, into the "holy city of God, and the light of men."

He adduced the example of Darius, who quieted the tumults of Judea, not by arms, but by executing the ancient edict of Cyrus. That of Josiah also, who reformed religion by causing the book of the law, which had been hidden through the malice of men, to be read to the people, and observed by them. Then, continues the historian, he made use of a very cutting expression: "If the fathers," said he, "should ask, why "France is not in peace, no other answer can be given, than "that which Jehu gave to Joram, *What peace can there be so* "*long as* ———" Here he stopped, and after pausing a little, added, "Ye know the rest." The story referred to we have in the ninth chapter of the second book of Kings. The words to which he pointed so distinctly that they could not be mistaken, but which he judged it convenient to suppress, we have in the twenty-second verse, where we are told, that when Jehu was asked by Joram, whether there was peace, he answered, *What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many?* It was impossible, considering, when, where, and to whom, the ambassador was directing his discourse, to entertain a doubt concerning his meaning. The respectable appellation of *mother* had been given to the church time immemorial—individual Christians were denominated her children. In regard to particular churches, they had been for ages, in the west, considered as the daughters of Rome. The Roman church was their common mother, so that this gentleman, addressing himself to the Tridentine fathers,

who represented their respective churches in the council, and in the midst of whom the pope's legates sat as presidents, had the boldness to call the church of the haughty and imperious Rome, not in so many words, but as intelligibly and manifestly a harlot, a sorceress, a Jezebel, the source of all their calamities. Indeed, the happy aposiopesis he employed, rendered the invective more energetical, and the intended application more unquestionable, than if he had spoken out. If he had spoken out, there would have been still room for suspicion, that (however unlikely) he must have had some other meaning to the words, else he could not, to their faces, have employed terms so opprobrious. The method he took, at the same time that it left no doubt as to the expression to be supplied, betrayed a consciousness, that he considered it both as incapable of any other application, and as too gross for utterance. Would not one be tempted to think, that either the French monarch had mistaken the principles of the servant he employed on this occasion, or that the latter had mistaken totally the intent of his embassy, and was actually pleading the cause of the protestants before the council, and not that of his master, who was endeavouring, by all possible means, to exterminate them? He concluded with declaring, that if the reformation he proposed was not quickly and seriously applied to, all the assistance of the king of Spain, (by arms doubtless he meant) of the pope, and of the other princes, would be to no purpose, and that the blood of those who should perish, though deservedly, on account of their own sins, would be required at the hands of the fathers then assembled. This discourse, as may well be imagined, excited very great indignation; but matters were then so critically circumstanced, and the fear of offending the king of France, and perhaps provoking him to adopt less sanguinary measures with his revolted subjects, made even the keenest advocates for the papacy to stifle their resentments, and take no notice of the offensive expressions.

Having exhibited to you the state of the papal claims of jurisdiction over the clergy, at that most memorable era, the reformation in the sixteenth century, I shall now attempt to convey some idea of the claims then advanced in behalf of the clergy, in the first instance, and ultimately of the pope, in

whom they all terminated, over the laity, especially over the secular powers. For this purpose, I shall here lay before you the scheme prepared in the same convention, for the reformation of princes and civil magistrates, which, though in the situation of things at that time, and on account of the strenuous opposition from the temporal powers, it was not found convenient to push, yet has never been departed from, nor abandoned, by those of that establishment; on the contrary, the several articles have, for ages, afforded matter of contention and struggles in all nations of Christendom. Much has been attained, and hardly has a proper opportunity been omitted of asserting even the most extravagant of them. The bill prepared for this purpose, contained a preamble, thirteen decrees, and a conclusion. It was in substance as follows:—

The council, beside the statutes enacted for reforming persons ecclesiastical, have judged it their duty to reform also secular persons of those abuses, which have been introduced against the immunities of the church, confident that princes will acquiesce, and cause due obedience to be rendered to the clergy. To this end they are admonished, before other things, to oblige their magistrates, delegates, and other temporal lords, to render their pastors that obedience, which those princes themselves are bound to perform to the sovereign pontiff; and for this purpose anew enforces whatever has been decreed by the sacred canons, and the imperial laws in favour of ecclesiastical immunities, which ought to be observed by all, under pain of anathema. The principal decrees are the following: that persons ecclesiastical, even though their clerical title should be doubtful, and though they themselves should consent, cannot, under any pretext, even that of public utility, be judged in a secular judicatory. Even in cases of notorious assassination, or other excepted cases, their prosecution must be preceded by a declaration of the bishop of the diocese. That in causes spiritual, matrimonial, those of heresy, tithes, &c. civil, criminal, mixed, belonging to the ecclesiastical court, as well over persons as over goods, tenths, &c. pertaining to the church, the temporal judge cannot intermeddle, notwithstanding any appeal, &c.; and those who, in such causes, shall recur to the secular power, shall be excommunicated, and deprived of the rights contended for.

Secular men cannot constitute judges in causes ecclesiastical, and clergymen, who shall accept such offices from laymen, shall be suspended from orders, deprived of benefices, and incapacitated. The secular cannot command the ecclesiastical judge not to excommunicate without licence, or to revoke, or suspend, an excommunication fulminated. No king or emperor can make edicts, relating to causes or persons ecclesiastical, or intermeddle with their jurisdiction, or even with the inquisition, but are obliged to lend their arm to the ecclesiastical judges when called on. Rulers may not put their hand to the fruits of vacant benefices, under pretence of custody, protection, &c.; secular persons, who shall accept such offices, shall be excommunicated, and clergymen suspended and deprived. Ecclesiastics shall not be constrained to pay taxes, excise, &c. not even under the name of free gifts, or loans, either for patrimonial goods, or the goods of the church. The letters, sentences, and citations, of the ecclesiastic judges, especially of the court of Rome, shall, immediately on being exhibited, be, without exception, intimated and executed, &c. If there be any doubt that the letters are forged, or that tumults will arise, the bishop, as apostolic delegate, may order the needful precautions. Princes and magistrates shall not quarter their officers, &c. on the houses, or monasteries of ecclesiastics, nor draw thence ought for victuals, or passage money. There were several other articles of the same stamp, which it is not necessary to enumerate. The above will sufficiently serve for a specimen.

By way of conclusion, there was an admonition to all princes, to have in veneration the things which are of ecclesiastical right, as pertaining to God, and not to allow others herein to offend, renewing all the constitutions of sovereign pontiffs and sacred canons in favour of ecclesiastical immunities; commanding, under pain of anathema, that, neither directly, nor indirectly, under any pretence, aught be enacted or executed against ecclesiastical persons, or goods, or against their liberty; any privilege or immemorial exemption to the contrary notwithstanding.

Such was the famous bill of rights, (if I may so express myself) of the clergy of Christendom in the sixteenth century, on which I shall beg leave to make a few remarks. In the first place, it is evident, that these articles imply a total independ-

ence of the ecclesiastic on the secular powers, inasmuch as the latter could, on this plan, use no coercive measures, either for preventing the commission of crimes by the former, or for punishing them when committed; could not, even for the eviction of civil debts, or discharge of lawful obligations, affect the clergy either in person, or in property, moveable or immoveable; could exact from them no aid for the exigencies of the state, however urgent. Now allowing that the independence were equal on both sides, it might admit a question, whether it be possible that two such independent states, whereof the subjects of each live together as members of the same community, and are blended in all the ordinary duties and concerns of life, could subsist any time on that footing. I observe, secondly, that the independence was solely on the side of the clergy. The laity could not, by their civil sanctions, affect the clergy without their own concurrence; but the clergy, both by their civil and by their religious sanctions, could affect the laity, and, in spite of their opposition, whilst the people had any religion, bring the most obstinate to their terms. The civil judge could not compel a clergyman to appear before his tribunal; the ecclesiastic judge could compel a layman, and did, daily compel such to appear before him. And in all the interferings and disputes between individuals of the different orders, the clerical only could decide. The ecclesiastic powers could command the aid of the secular; the secular could not that of the ecclesiastical. I observe, thirdly, that though the kinds of power, in the different orders, were commonly distinguished into spiritual and temporal, the much greater part of the power of ecclesiastics was strictly temporal. Matters spiritual are those only of faith and manners, and the latter only as manners, that is, as influencing opinion, wounding charity, or raising scandal. Whereas, under the general term *spiritual*, they had got included the more important part of civil matters also, affairs matrimonial and testamentary, questions of legitimacy and succession, covenants and conventions, and wherever the interposition of an oath was customary. Add to these, that they were the sole arbiters of the rights avowedly civil of the church and churchmen, and in every thing wherein these had, in common with laymen, any share or concern. Though these privileges (weakly called immunities, since they

imply dominion) had, for centuries, been claimed by the clerical order, many of them in most countries actually obtained, and the rest made matter of incessant broils and contentions; yet all of them were never any where acquiesced in by the secular powers. Had they, indeed, admitted them in their full extent, the abolition of the secular authority would have quickly ensued; the priesthood would have engrossed every thing. Christendom would have then become in a sense very different from that of the apostle, *a royal priesthood*, or, as some like to render his words, *a kingdom of priests*. In scripture the church is so denominated in the same sense, wherein it is said of all Christians, without exception, that they are made kings and priests to God; because all have free access to him through the blood of his Son; not because our instructors in holy things, men specially called to be ensamples to the flock, in faith and patience, in resignation and humility, were constituted lords with plenary power, both temporal and spiritual, over God's heritage. I observe, in the last place, that an ordinary reader, who has not entered thoroughly into the spirit of those times, cannot fail to be exceedingly surprised, (as I acknowledge I was myself) on the first perusal of the aforesaid overtures. They are ushered in as pious resolutions to be adopted by the council, for the reformation of princes and secular persons. One is naturally led to expect, that in such a writing, calculated purely to reform the great, their faults will, with Christian freedom, but in the spirit of meekness, be animadverted on; that one shall find a just censure on the pride, the luxury, the impiety, the extortion, the envy, the revenge, and the other vices which so often abound among those in high rank and authority; or that one shall see branded with proper severity, that unchristian ambition, which leads sovereigns so often, though fellow-Christians in profession, to make war on one another, on the most trivial pretences, to the destruction of one moiety of their subjects, the oppression of the other, and dishonour of the Christian name. But not a syllable of these. Was there nothing of this kind, then, among the powers of Europe? Never, perhaps, was there more. Yet this venerable body seemed to think, that there was nothing in their earthly potentates which would need correction, were they sufficiently submissive to their

ghostly fathers, the bishops and the priests, that is, in effect, would they but resign to them their whole authority, and consent to become their humble slaves, a virtue, it seems, more successful, in the eyes of their reverences, than charity itself in covering sins.

In the same spirit, the seventeenth canon* of general reformation, passed in the last session of that council, has these words: "Against those bishops, who in church, or out of it, behave "themselves meanly towards the ministers of kings, persons of "quality, and barons, and with too much indignity, not only "give place to them, but do them personal service, the synod, "detesting this conduct, and renewing the canons concerning "the decorum of episcopal dignity, commands bishops to be-"ware of such practices, and every where to challenge due re-"spect to their degree, remembering they are pastors; and also "commands princes and all others to bear them the honour and "reverence due to fathers." How high their claims went, we learn from a canon of the council of Troyes, in the ninth century, which orders, that no man shall presume to sit in the presence of a bishop, unless he command it. We know who they were in ancient times that sought honour one of another, who affected the principal seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts, who loved greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. We know also who it was that expressly prohibited, amongst his disciples, such unbecoming emulation and worldly vanity, who enjoined them not to seek honour from men, or to contend who, in the judgment of men, should be greatest, but to seek that honour only which cometh from God; we know also who it was that made usefulness the standard of greatness, and pronounced him to be possessed of the highest dignity, who is most humble and most serviceable; who, instead of courting, is solicitous to avoid such enviable distinctions. On which of these models the convention at Trent, and other preceding councils were formed, I shall leave to the candid and impartial to determine. I shall conclude this lecture with a story, homely indeed, but apposite: An English country parson was bragging, in a large company, of the success he had had in reforming his parishioners, on whom his labours, he said, had produced a wonderful change to

the better. Being asked in what respect, he replied, that when he came first among them, they were a set of unmannerly clowns, who paid him no more deference than they did to one another; did not so much as pull off their hat when they spoke to him, but bawled out as roughly and familiarly as though he were their equal; whereas, now, they never presumed to address him but cap in hand, and, in a submissive voice, made him their best bow, when they were at ten yards distance, and styled him *your reverence*, at every word. A Quaker, who had heard the whole patiently, made answer: "And so, friend, the "upshot of this reformation, of which thou hast so much car-"nal glorying, is, that thou hast taught thy people to worship "thyself." So much for clerical and papal claims. But, in order to know more exactly the state of those times, we must be acquainted with the sentiments of both sides on every principal question. I shall, therefore, in my next lecture, take notice of the reception, which those articles of reformation I have read to you, met with from the secular powers.

LECTURE XXII.

In my two last prelections, I laid before you, in their utmost extent, the papal claims of jurisdiction over the clergy, and the clerical claims not only of independence, but of authority over the secular powers. I promised to take notice, in the present lecture, of the reception which the last mentioned claims over the secular powers met with from those against whom they were aimed.

Copies of those articles, for the reformation of princes and magistrates, having been sent by the ambassadors to their respective courts, they were instructed to give them all the opposition in their power. In this resolution, none were more determined than the emperor, and the king of France. The former wrote to cardinal Moron, that neither as emperor, nor as archduke, would he ever consent, that they should speak in council of reforming the jurisdiction of princes, or of divesting them of their right to draw contributions from the clergy; that he considered all their past evils as having sprung from the oppressions attempted by ecclesiastics, both on the people and on the princes. The French ambassadors prepared a protestation, which they were commanded to make, if there should be occasion for it.

In one of the meetings called congregations, one of the fathers, in a long speech, advanced, that the cause of all their corruptions proceeded from the princes, who, of all men, had the greatest need of reformation; adding, that the heads of a scheme for this purpose were already digested, meaning that which I gave you in a preceding lecture, and that it was now time to propose them, and not to suffer so important a design to come to nothing through their dilatoriness. As here the rights of sovereigns were touched, the ambassador Ferrier, of whose vehemence, as well as freedom in speaking, I have already given you a specimen, interposed, and, in a very resolute tone, supported the rights of the secular powers in general, and of his master, the king of France, in particular. Though he was by

no means destitute of eloquence, his eloquence was not always adapted to time and place.

The liberty of expression, in which he indulged himself, was too great for the prejudices of the age in which he lived; and the reflections which he threw out were too galling, to be borne by men of so much importance as those reverend fathers, who looked on themselves as the only rightful legislators of the universe, and whose authority they deemed it treason, or what was still worse, sacrilege, even in sovereigns to dispute.

Ferrier, in his oration, lamented, that Christian kings had now, for more than a hundred and fifty years, at the councils of Constance, Basil, Lateran, and Trent, been earnestly requiring of popes the reform of ecclesiastic discipline, and that all their endeavours had proved abortive. They had, indeed, got a large return of decrees and anathemas. They demanded one thing, and they are put off with another; insomuch, that in all probability, for three hundred years to come, the same grievances will be lamented, and the same requests of redress will be made to no better purpose. In regard to the huge mass of reforms which had occupied the council for some months past, they had sent their opinion of it to the king, who, in return, wrote them, that he found therein few things conformable, but many contrary to ancient discipline.

Ferrier maintained further, that the plaster which they had been preparing, far from being adapted to heal the wounds of the church, could serve only to make them fester, and to cause even sores that had been healed, to break out afresh: particularly that those expedients of excommunicating and anathematizing princes were unexampled in the primitive church, and solely calculated for opening a wide gate to rebellion in every state; that the whole chapter of the reformation of kings and princes had no other aim, than to divest their temporal rulers of all authority. Yet by such rulers some excellent ecclesiastic laws had been made, which even popes had not disdained to adopt, honouring their authors with the name of saints; that by those laws the church had been governed, not only since the times of the pragmatic and the concordate, but before, nay, for more than four hundred years before the book of decretals, which later popes had got substituted into their place, had been

so much as heard of. He then attempted a comparison between the ancient canons and the modern, particularly the regulations made for the reform of discipline in the preceding sessions of the present council, exposing the futility of their new canons in a strain of contemptuous irony, the most provoking imaginable. He maintained, that the king his master, the founder and patron of almost all the churches of France, may, for the instant and urgent necessities of the state, in consequence of the power given him of God, and by the most ancient laws of the kingdom, freely avail himself of even the ecclesiastical goods and rents of his subjects. He said, that the king was particularly surprised at two things; that those fathers adorned with great ecclesiastical power in the divine ministry, and assembled solely for restoring ecclesiastical discipline, not attending to that, had turned aside to reform those whom, though wicked, it behoved them to obey and pray for; and he was surprised still more, that they should imagine themselves entitled, without admonition, to excommunicate and anathematize princes, who are given them of God, a thing not to be done even to a plebeian, who perseveres in a heinous transgression; that Michael the archangel did not dare to curse the devil, neither did Michaiah or Daniel curse the most impious kings; yet those fathers vented all their curses against kings and princes; nay, their maledictions were levelled even against his most Christian majesty, for defending the laws of his ancestors, and the liberties of the Gallican church. He concluded, that the king required them not to decree any thing against those laws and liberties; and, if they should, commanded his ambassadors to oppose their decrees, as they then did, adding, that if, not meddling with sovereigns, they would attend to that which all the world expected of them, their conduct would be most agreeable to his majesty, and should have the utmost aid of his ministers. Hitherto he spoke in the name of the king. Then, in a bold epiphonema, he invoked heaven and earth, and the fathers themselves, to consider whether it suited the time, to show no sympathy with the church, in the present distractions, or with France, involved in a civil war on account of religion, but to have all their sensibility engrossed by their own dignities, and honours, and revenues, which cannot be preserved by other arts

than those whereby they were acquired; that in such confusions, it was their duty to repent, and when Christ cometh, not to bawl out, *Send us into the herd of Swine;* that if they would restore the church to its ancient reputation, bring adversaries to repentance, and reform princes, they should follow the example of good king Hezekiah, who did not imitate his impious father, nor the first, counting backwards, second, third, and fourth, of his very deficient progenitors, but went further back to the imitation of his remote, but more perfect, ancestors; in like manner it behoved those fathers not to attend to their immediate predecessors, however learned, but to ascend to an Ambrose, an Augustin, a Chrysostome, who conquered heretics, not by the modern method of instigating princes to slaughter them, but by methods more primitive, by their prayers, by the example of a godly life, by preaching pure doctrine; for if the fathers whom he addressed would first form themselves into Ambroses, Augustines, and Chrysostomes, and thus purify the church of Christ, they would soon transform princes into Theodosiuses, Honoriuses, Arcadiuses, Valentinians, and Gratians. This he prayed that with the help of God they might effectuate, and so concluded.

We cannot wonder, that this bold, and even dictatorial language, should irritate, as in fact it did, in a very high degree, not the pontificii only, but the other prelates, even the French clergy themselves. The historian tells us, that he had no sooner ended, than there arose such a general murmur, that it was found necessary to dismiss the congregation. Some taxed the discourse with heresy; others said it looked very suspicious; almost all agreed that it was offensive to pious ears, (meaning, no doubt, their own) and could be calculated only to break up the council; that he attributed to kings more than belonged to them; that he inferred the pope's authority not to be necessary to entitle them to ecclesiastical goods; that he made the king of France like the king of England, Harry the eight, head of the church within his own dominions. Above all, nothing offended more grievously than his suggesting, that the authority of the king of France over persons and goods, was not founded on the pragmatic, concordate, and papal privileges, but on the law of nature, the sacred scriptures, the ancient councils, and laws of Christian emperors. As his speech was every where attacked,

and often misrepresented, he was obliged to disperse some copies of it for his own vindication. This occasioned a formal answer in writing, to which he made a spirited reply.

The principal instruction to be drawn from such altercations, is the knowledge they afford of the opinions and the spirit of the times, and of the mode of reasoning employed in their controversies. We are sometimes surprised to observe, that the things which proved matter of reprehension, were such as we should have least suspected. Thus, what he affirmed of princes that they were given of God, was combated with great keenness as heretical, and condemned by *unam sanctam*, one of the decrees very happily named *extravagantes* of pope Boniface VIII. He ought, said they, to have distinguished, by affirming, they are of God, *mediante suo vicario*. An easy device for making all power, temporal and spiritual, to be immediately from the pope, and but mediately from God. To their exceptions on this head, his excellency's answer was very brief. He had not said more simply and absolutely, that princes are from God, than the prophet Daniel and the apostle Paul had said before him, and that if there be no heresy in their expressions, there can be none in his; that for his own part, the distinction of mediate and immediate, and the extravagant constitutions of Boniface, never entered into his mind. His apology, instead of diminishing, only increased the odium and clamour against him. He obstinately defends, said they, those errors which he ought penitently to recant. His opposition, however, and the alarm taken by sovereigns, were sufficient to prevent those attempts on the secular power being carried further. In the other questions agitated, as those about residence, and the jurisdiction of bishops, there was a division of the clergy into two parties, the pontificii, or patrons of papal despotism, on one side, and those on the other, who maintained, that the bishops had a divine right to a share in the jurisdiction. But in the struggle between the spiritual power and the temporal, the ambassadors had the whole council for antagonists. Both the contending factions were united on this head. It had been, indeed, uniformly the policy of Rome to exert herself in supporting the attempts, made in every country, to draw both power and property out of the hands of the laity into those of the clergy.

When this was once effected, she was never at a loss for expedients, whereby she might again draw the whole, or the greater part, out of their hands into her own. By the first, she secured in her interest the clergy of every nation, and laid the foundation of such a close dependence on herself, as rendered the exertion necessary for obtaining the second object much easier, than what had been employed for obtaining the first.

To adduce some instances: with what infinite labour and contention did the pope, aided by the bishops, (always ready, at his instigation, to rebel against the civil powers) wrest the investitures in church livings out of the hands of princes, in order, as appeared at the time, to restore them to the chapters of the several dioceses; and with what ease, comparatively, were the chapters afterwards wormed out of their right by the pope! First, he employed the gentler method of recommendation. When this was ineffectual, he commanded. As even commands were sometimes disregarded, he proceeded to cause his commands to be conveyed by nuncios, empowered to give collation, if necessary; and armed with the highest censures against the disobedient. Thus the clergy found, to their cost, that the last error was worse than the first, and that, under the appearance of recovering their liberty, they had brought themselves (as is often deservedly the case with rebels) into greater bondage. The monarch had commonly some regard to the merits of the candidate. The pope acknowledged no merit but that of a weighty purse. Natives were formerly preferred, now often aliens and strangers, who could not speak the language. Thus Roman courtiers, minions of the pontiff, men who resided constantly in Italy, frequently drew the richest benefices of distant countries, whilst the duties of the charge lay neglected. We have another example in the monks, who, at first, under pretence of vowed poverty, acquired great credit with the public, as aiming at no temporal advantage, but doing all through charity, for the service of the people. Afterwards, when their credit was fully established, Rome quickly devised reasons for dispensing with their vow. From that time they enriched themselves. When they were become opulent, the pope treated them as he treated bishoprics; bestowed them on his favourites, sold them to the highest bidder, or gave them in commen-

dam. Rome always asserted resolutely, and, in most cases, successfully, the clergy's right of exemption from being taxed by the secular powers; but it was in order to slip into the place of those powers, and assume the prerogative of taxing them herself. This, though always controverted by temporal rulers, she so effectually secured, that sovereigns, in any remarkable exigency, especially when they could plead some holy enterprize, such as a crusade for the massacre of infidels or heretics, were fain to recur to the pope, as the easiest and surest way of obtaining the assistance of their own clergy. This also gave the pope an easy method of bribing princes to his side, when he wanted to destroy or mortify any adverse power. It was his usual game, to ply the bishop against the king. But this, when his subalterns proved mutinous, he could successfully reverse, and ply the king against the bishop. At the time of this very council, he was forced to recur to these artifices. Both the Spanish clergy and the French, having proved refractory, on the article of episcopal jurisdiction, his holiness did not find it a fruitless expedient, for preventing their obtaining the countenance and support of their respective sovereigns, to give hopes to the latter, of the aids solicited from him, for extirpating heresy, and securing the catholic faith, namely, the tenths of the ecclesiastic revenues, in their own dominions.

Thus I have, in this and the two preceding lectures, given you a sketch of the state at which the papal authority was arrived in the sixteenth century, at the time of the sitting of the council of Trent, the last which, under the name of ecumenical, (though not universally received even by the Roman Catholics) has been holden in the church. I have also given you some idea of the different sentiments, on this article, entertained by different parties of Romanists; for, on this subject, and on some others, they are far from being unanimous. I shall now add a few things on the present state of the hierarchy, in regard to the form, particularly on the dignity and office of cardinal, which has naturally sprung up out of the changes gradually effected in the constitution of the Roman church, in respect both of the extent of her dominion, and of the exaltation of her power, concluding with some account of the manner in which the hierarch was wont to be installed in his sublime station.

As to the office of cardinal, there can be no doubt, that for several hundred years, there was no appearance* in the church either of the name or the thing. Though some other accounts have been given of its origin less honourable for the office, what appears to me the most plausible is the following.

When the distinction of patriarchs and metropolitans, and their suffragans, came to be established, it naturally gave rise to some distinction in the presbyters and deacons of the archiepiscopal churches, whether patriarchal or metropolitical, from the presbyters and deacons of the ordinary, that is, of the suffragan bishops. The dignity of an archiepiscopal see, as it raised its bishop above the other bishops of the province, would readily be conceived to confer some share of superiority, at least in honour and precedency, on the presbyters and deacons belonging to it, above the presbyters and deacons of the subordinate bishoprics of the province. The former were counsellors and assessors to a man, who had a certain jurisdiction over those to whom the latter were counsellors and assessors. In consequence of this, the presbyters and deacons, which constitute what, in the primitive church, was called the presbytery, or bishop's senate, came to be denominated in some capital cities, where the primates resided, (for the custom was neither universal nor confined to Rome) cardinal presbyters and cardinal deacons, that is, according to the original import of the name, chief, or principal presbyters and deacons; being accounted such when compared with their com-provincials of the same order. But still the more essential difference of the orders deacon, presbyter, and bishop, was sacredly preserved. Thus a cardinal deacon, though superior to the other provincial deacons, was held inferior to an ordinary provincial presbyter, and a cardinal presbyter, though superior to the other provincial presbyters, was inferior to a suffragan bishop. Accordingly, in the most noted councils held at Rome, we find, that the cardinal Roman priests always signed under the Italian bishops. Nor did any bishop then accept at Rome the office of cardinal priest, though it be not uncommon now, for those who are bishops in other cities, to be priests or deacons in the Roman conclave.

As gradually a number of titles, that had before been enjoyed by many, were engrossed by Rome, whose supereminence came

in process of time to swallow up all other distinctions; as the term *pope*, and the epithets *most blessed, most holy*, which had, for several centuries, been attributed to all bishops, at least to all patriarchs and metropolitans, were arrogated by Rome, as belonging peculiarly to her pontiff; so the title *cardinal* was, from the like principle, assumed as belonging peculiarly to her clergy. Yet it remained at Ravenna till the year 1543, when it was abrogated by Paul III. Indeed, as the Roman see rose in power and riches, the revenues of all belonging to it rose in proportion, and the patrimony annexed to a deaconship in Rome was far more considerable, than the revenue of an ordinary bishopric in the provinces. And if such was the case with the deacons, we may be assured, that not only no provincial bishop, but very few metropolitans, were able to vie in splendour and magnificence with a Roman presbyter.

Exorbitant wealth annexed to offices may be said universally to produce two effects. There are singular exceptions; but these cannot affect the general truth. The two effects are, arrogance and laziness. When the priests of Rome were made petty princes, one might be assured, they would be no longer officiating priests. Opulence is never at a loss to find expedients for devolving the burden of the incumbent service on other shoulders. Another effect is *arrogance*. When Roman presbyters and deacons could live in greater pomp and magnificence than most bishops, or even archbishops, could afford to do, they would soon learn to assume a state and superiority, in other respects unsuited to the different functions. Accordingly, we find, that in the three last councils of note, to wit, Pisa, Constance, and Trent, there were many and warm complaints on the haughtiness, and even insolence of these new dignitaries, who affected to be styled the princes of the church, and who thought themselves well entitled to this distinction. For they were both the electors and the counsellors of the sovereign pontiff, and had got it pretty well established, that in every vacancy one of their college should be chosen pontiff. It could not easily, for some time, be relished, that those who, by canonical rules, belonged to a lower order, as priests and deacons, should treat the greatest prelates in the church as their inferiors and vassals. The honourable distinctions conferred on them by

popes still widened the distance. They got the red hat from Innocent IV. in 1244. Paul II. added the red cap and scarlet housings; and Urban VIII. in the last century, dignified them with the title of *eminence*.

At the same time it must be observed, on the other hand, in excuse for their uncommon exaltation, that when the bishop of Rome, that is, the pastor of a single diocese, or, as it was still more properly called at first, a single parish, a single church, or congregation, was risen insensibly into the head of the church universal, or, at least, the greater part of it; and when his presbytery, that is, his small consistory of colleagues and ministers, who assisted him in conducting the affairs of the parish, was, by the same insensible degrees, advanced into the senate, by whose assistance and consultations the affairs of the whole church were to be conducted, the members must, of necessity, become men of another sort of importance. This gave rise to the consequences I have mentioned, and these again gave rise to regulations in which (unless men's view had been to overturn the fabric of the hierarchy altogether, and bring things back to their primitive model) it was proper, and even necessary, to consider more what the office of cardinal then was, than what it originally had been when the church of Rome was no more than the church of Corinth, or any other Christian congregation.

At different periods there have been made changes, both in the number of the members of this college, and in their functions. The footing whereon it now stands is this: the conclave, which is the name of the court constituted by the cardinals, consists of seventy members, exclusively of the pope their head. Of these there are six bishops; for though this could not have been from the beginning, or rather from the time that the distinction between bishop and presbyter was first settled; for then no more than one bishop was allowed to one church, it was not unreasonable, to have also some of this order in the number, when it was no longer the presbytery of a single church, but the privy council of the monarch for the management of the whole. There are fifty priests, and fourteen deacons. They are, on occasion of vacancy by death, nominated by the pope, and may be of any country whatever. That they should be, as much as possible, taken from the different countries of Chris-

tendom, or rather, the different Roman Catholic countries, since they have a share in the government of the whole Roman Catholic church, is entirely suitable, and is now in a manner established by custom.

But the very great alterations made in this college, or society, are a demonstration of the prodigious change that arose in the nature and destination of the office. The bishop of Rome, for several ages after the time of Constantine, was elected, as most others were, by the presbytery, that is, the officiating clergy within the bishop's cure, and by the people of Rome, which, with the concurrence of the com-provincial bishops, and the emperor's ratification, were always sufficient for settling their *præsul*, or president, as he was frequently denominated. Indeed, for an office of such immense wealth and eminence, as it quickly rose to, after the establishment of Christianity, the election continued too long in such improper hands. The consequence was, that for some centuries the choice of a bishop was almost as necessarily attended with a civil war in Rome, as that of a king was in Poland. The election is now in none of the societies it was in formely. The officiating priests, who serve the several cures in Rome, with their subordinate ministers or deacons, have no concern in it. As little has any temporal monarch, the bishops of the provinces, or the Roman people. And though the conclave may be said to have sprung out of the presbytery, yet, by a thousand successive alterations, they are at length so completely changed, that, except the election of the pope, there is not one office they have in common; and even this, when examined critically, is no otherwise the same but in name. The ancient presbytery's concern was only in giving a pastor to the Romans, the modern conclave's concern is in giving a sovereign to the church.

I need not mention the expedients that have been devised, by pluralities, bishoprics in commendam, and the like, for increasing the splendour and luxury of those princes of the church, and electors of its monarch. In the time of a vacancy in the papal chair, the practice is now, that all the cardinals in Rome are shut up together, in a place, called, from this usage, the *conclave*, where they are to remain, (there being all necessary accommodation for them) till they elect a pontiff. Cardi-

nals, who arrive before the election is over, are enclosed with the rest. They give their votes by ballot. And if, upon scrutiny, none of the candidates has two thirds of the votes, the balloting must, after a stated interval, be repeated. And this continues to be reiterated, if they should remain shut up for years, always till one of them attains the superiority I have mentioned.

It may not be amiss to subjoin here, the description of the pope's consecration, given by cardinal Rasponi, in his book concerning the church of the Lateran, which is also related by father Bonanni, in his medallic history of the popes, and by Lenfant, in his history of the council of Constance. " Before the " usage of the conclave was introduced by Gregory the tenth," says cardinal Rasponi, " the cardinals, three days after the ob-" sequies of the former pope, convened in the Lateran church, " where, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, and the cele-" bration of mass, they proceed to the election of a pope. The " election being made, the first cardinal deacon invested the " pope elect in his pontifical habits, and announced the name " which he chose to take:" for it has been the custom now, for several centuries, that the pope should assume a new name on being elected. " Afterwards, two cardinals, the most eminent " in dignity, one on his right hand, the other on his left, con-" ducted him to the altar, where he prostrated himself in ado-" ration of God, whilst they sang the *Te Deum*. After the " *Te Deum*, the cardinals seated the pope in a marble chair, " which was behind the altar, under a sort of dome, or vault, " where the pope, being set, admitted the cardinals, the bishops, " and some others, to kiss his feet, and to receive the *kiss of* " *peace*. Then the pope rising, the cardinals conducted him " through the portico to another chair, bored like what is called " in French, selle percée. This chair was thence very proper-" ly named *stercoraria*, the stercorary. It was formerly placed " before the portico of the patriarchal basilic, and is now to be " seen in the cloister of that basilic. The use of these chairs, " however, was afterwards abolished by Leo X., probably for " this, amongst other reasons, because the perforated chair was " become connected with the fabulous story of the female pope. " That, however, is not a protestant fable, as some persons ig-

"norantly pretend, for it was current long before the days of "Luther. But the continuance of the use of that chair pre- "served the memory of the story, and might appear to the "credulous an evidence of its truth. Whilst the pope sat on "the stercorary, the choir sang these words of scripture: Sus- "citat de pulvere egenum, et de stercore erigit pauperem, ut "sedeat cum principibus, et solium gloriæ teneat. Psalm cxiii. "7. The last clause is not in the Psalm. *He raiseth the poor "out of the dust, and lifteth the needy off the dunghill, that he "may set him with the princes of his people, and that he may "possess the throne of Glory.* The intention of this ceremony, "it was said, was to insinuate to the pope the need there is of "the virtue of humility, which ought to be the first step of his "greatness. After remaining some time in this chair, the pope "received from the hands of the chamberlain three deniers, "which he threw to the people, pronouncing these words: *Sil- "ver and gold I have none for my pleasure, but what I have I "give you.* Afterwards, the prior of the Lateran basilic, and "one of the cardinals, or one of the canons of that basilic, took "the pope between them, and whilst they walked in the porti- "co, shouts of acclamation were raised near the basilic, and "the election was declared, with the name which the pope had "taken. In this manner they conducted the pope to the basi- "lic of St. Sylvester, where, being placed before this basilic in "a chair of porphyry, the prior of the basilic put into his hands "a *ferula*, in sign of correction and government, and the keys, "to denote the power which God gave to St. Peter, Prince of "the apostles, of opening and shutting, of binding and loosing, "and which passes (according to our historian) successively to "all the Roman pontiffs. Thence the pope, carrying the feru- "la, and the keys, went to place himself in another chair, re- "sembling the former; and after remaining there some time, "restored the ferula and the keys to the prior, who girt him "with a girdle of red silk, giving him a purse of the same co- "lour and stuff, wherein there were twelve precious stones, and "a small bit of musk. Onuphrius, in his treatise on the basi- "lic of the Lateran, says, that it was the prior of this basilic "who gave these things to the pope. His sitting in the two "chairs, denoted the primacy which St. Peter conferred on

"him, and the power of preaching the gospel conferred by St. "Paul. The girdle signified continence and chastity; the "purse denoted the treasure, out of which the poor were to be "nourished; the twelve precious stones represented the power "of the twelve apostles, which resides totally in the pontiff; "in fine, the musk denoted the fragrancy of good works, ac-"cording to that saying, *We are to God a sweet savour of* "*Christ.* In this chair the pope elect admitted the ministers "of the palace to kiss his feet, and to receive the kiss of peace. "There, too, several pieces of silver were delivered to him by "the chamberlain, to the value of ten pence. These he threw "to the people at three different times, pronouncing these "words, *He hath scattered; he hath given to the poor; his* "*righteousness remaineth for ever.* All this being done, the "pope elect went next Sunday, attended by all the orders of "the sacred palace, and the principal people of the city, to the "basilic of the Vatican, and there, before the confession of St. "Peter, he was solemnly consecrated by the bishop of Ostia, "to whom this office specially belongs. After this function, "the archdeacon and the second deacon gave the pall to the "pope, the archdeacon pronouncing these words, *Receive the* "*pall, which is the plenitude of the pontifical office, to the ho-*"*nour of Almighty God, of the most happy virgin his mother,* "*of the blessed apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and of the holy* "*Roman church.*"

After this description, cardinal Rasponi adds these words:— "This is what was done when the pontiff was announced or "proclaimed in the church of the Lateran; but when the elec-"tion was made in the Vatican, the pope, immediately after "being conducted to the altar by two cardinals, or after hav-"ing performed his adoration, and offered a secret prayer, "kneeling, was placed in a chair behind the altar, where he "admitted the cardinal bishops, and the others, during the "singing of the *Te Deum,* to kiss his feet, and to receive the "kiss of peace. The following Sunday, they assembled in the "same church, and the pope, crowned according to the custom "of his ancestors, went to the Lateran palace; but before en-"tering it, he seated himself in the *stercorary,* where, sitting "down thrice, according to custom, he was introduced by the

" cardinals into the basilic, distributing money to the populace. " There he ascended a throne behind the altar, where he admitted the canons of the basilic to kiss his feet, and to receive " the kiss of peace: which being done, he went to place himself in the chairs that were before the oratory of St. Sylvester, where all was performed that has been recited above. " But if it happened that the pope was created out of Rome, " all the clergy, when he made his entry into that city, and " before entering the gate of the Lateran, went to meet him " without the gate, in pontifical habits, with the standard of " the cross and censers; and, entering thus into the Lateran " church, they observed, though in an order somewhat different, all the ceremonies mentioned above. And if the pope, " coming to Rome after his consecration, went to the church " of St. Peter, the same rites were used there as in the Lateran church, except only that he did not receive the canons of " St. Peter to kiss his feet in the portico, and that he did not " sit down on the *stercorary*, which is not in that church. For " this reason, the next day after mass, he went, without the " tiara, to the Lateran palace, and before entering the basilic, " he placed himself on the stercorary, with the accustomed " ceremonies."

These ceremonies, it must be owned, appear to us very silly, and some of them absolutely ridiculous. But ye may depend on it, that there is neither exaggeration nor misrepresentation in the account above given. It is not given by an enemy to that profession, or by a stranger to the customs used on such occasions, who could relate them only from hearsay. It is a relation given by a friend, a cardinal too, one who had probably witnessed them oftener than once, and who had himself a principal part to act on those occasions. The ceremonies of consecration as bishop, in case the pope elect had, previously to his election, been only in priest's or deacon's orders, have not been related by the cardinal, as not differing materially from those used in the ordination of bishops, which are to be found in the Roman pontifical. There was, besides, a ceremony of coronation used in the instalment of the popes, which seems not to have been introduced earlier than the thirteenth century; and it was in the following century, the fourteenth, that the triple

crown was devised. Benedict the twelfth seems to have been the first pope that wore it. The reasons which the canonists give for the use of the triple crown are so diverse, and so fantastic, that it is not worth while to report them.

The rites employed in coronation I shall give you some notion of, from the account given by Lenfant, in his history of the council of Constance, of the coronation of Martin the fifth, created pope in a peculiar manner, agreed on by that council, in the room of John the twenty-third, whom they had deposed. "There was erected in the court of the palace," says our historian, "a grand theatre, which could contain about a hundred persons. Close to the wall was a very high throne, "above which there was a canopy of cloth of gold, the seat "destined for his holiness. On the right hand, and on the "left, were ranged several other seats, a little lower, but magnificent, for the princes and the prelates to sit on. At eight "o'clock in the morning, the two patriarchs, (for since the time "of the crusades, they had got titular Latin patriarchs in the "eastern patriarchal sees subdued by the Mahometans) the "twenty-two cardinals, (for there were no more then present) "the archbishops, the bishops, the mitred abbots, entered the "court of the palace, on horseback, in pontifical habits. The "emperor, and the other princes, followed on foot. When all "the people were assembled, the pope mounted the theatre, "preceded by the clergy, carrying the cross and waxen tapers. "On the forepart of the theatre there was an excellent choir of "music, which sang and played on all sorts of instruments. "The pope had on his head a superb tiara, seeded with gold "crowns, with a golden cross on the top. At his right hand, "a little behind, were cardinal Viviers, and a patriarch; at his "left, cardinal Brancas, with another patriarch. Then marched the other cardinals, and the grand master of Rhodes, who "were all received by the emperor, the electors, and the "princes. The pope being placed on the throne, the patriarch "of Antioch took his tiara, or crown, off his head, and kneeled "before him, holding his crown in his hand. Near him other "cardinals kneeled also; one of whom carried some tow at the "end of a stick, another a cross, and the rest wax tapers. At "the pope's right hand sat cardinal de Brancas, with eight

" other cardinals; at his left, the grand master of Rhodes, with " eight cardinals. Next them, on the right, the emperor, on " the left, the elector of Brandenburg, both attended by arch- " bishops. Next them, electors, princes, bishops, and other " prelates, as many as the place could contain. The rest sat " on the stairs, which had been made very wide for the pur- " pose. There was, beside these, in the court, a great number " of archbishops, bishops, and other great lords, both ecclesias- " tic and secular, who surrounded the theatre on horseback. " There was, likewise, an immense crowd of people, who could " not get into the court. When the music had ceased, one of " the cardinals, who was kneeling before the pope, and who " carried the tow, lighted it, and twice said aloud, addressing " himself to the pope, *Sancte pater, sic transit gloria mundi.* " After which, three cardinals, who had been selected for put- " ting the crown on the pope's head, standing up with the " grand master of Rhodes, and taking the crown from the " hands of the pope, they all four kneeled on the highest step " of the throne, whence, after saying a prayer, they arose, and " put the crown on the pope's head, after which, resuming their " former places, they heard the *Te Deum*, and the music. " When they left the place, the pope mounted his white horse, " which was preceded by three led horses, that were also white, " and had red caparisons. The inferior clergy walked before, " followed by the abbots, bishops, archbishops, and cardinals, " on horseback. The emperor, on foot, held the reins of the " pope's bridle on the right, walking in the dirt, (which is par- " ticularly observed by the historian) whilst the elector of Bran- " denburg did the same on the left. Thus the pope was car- " ried in procession from the cathedral to the Augustin monas- " tery, and thence re-conducted to the episcopal palace. Here " ended the ceremony." And here shall end our account of the rise and establishment of papal dominion.

LECTURE XXIII.

HAVING now given you some account of the rise and establishment of the Romish hierarchy, it is but reasonable, that before I dismiss the subject of ecclesiastic history, I should consider the causes which have contributed to the declension of that wonderful empire. This will lead me to remark a little on the latent springs, the progress, and the effects of the reformation.

In all governments, of what kind soever, it may be justly said, that the dominion of the few over the many is primarily founded in opinion. The natural strength among beings of the same order, which is equal in the individuals, or nearly so, lies always in the multitude. But the opinion both of right, and of occupancy, or secure possession, can and does universally invest the smaller with the direction or government of the greater number. By the opinion of right, we are restrained, through justice, or a sense of duty, from divesting a man of what we think him entitled to enjoy. By the opinion of occupancy, we are restrained, through prudence, or a sense of danger, from disturbing a man in the possession of what we think he has a firm hold of. Either opinion, when strong, is generally sufficient to ensure peace; but they operate most powerfully in conjunction. When the two opinions are disjoined, that is, when unfortunately, under any government, it is the general opinion, that the right is in one, and the occupancy in another, there frequently ensue insurrections and intestine broils.

The above remarks hold equally with regard to property, which is in effect a species of power. Now these opinions, which, from the influence of custom, and insensible imitation, men have a natural tendency to form, prove, in all ordinary cases, a sufficient security to the few rich and great, in the enjoyment of all their envied advantages, against the far superior force, if it were combined, of the many poor and small. Indeed, it is opinion that prevents the combination, and makes

that a master may sleep securely amid fifty servants and dependents, each of whom, perhaps, taken singly, is, both in bodily strength, and in mental abilities, an overmatch for him. It is this which vests a single person with the command of an army, who, in contradiction to their own will, give implicit obedience to his; notwithstanding that they carry in their hands what would prove the instruments of working their own pleasure, and his destruction. It will not be doubted, that it is in the same way, by means of opinion, that ecclesiastical power has a hold of the minds of men.

There is, however, this remarkable difference in the two sorts of power, that knowledge and civilization, unless accompanied with profligacy of manners, add strength to those opinions on which civil authority rests, at the same time that they weaken those opinions which serve as a basis to a spiritual despotism, or a hierarchy like the Romish. The more a people becomes civilized, the more their notions of justice and property, prescription and peaceable possession, become steady; the more they see the necessity of maintaining these inviolate, and the ruinous consequences of infringing them. The love of peace and science, the encouragement of industry and arts, the desire of public good and order, the abhorrence of crimes, confusion, and blood, all co-operate to make those opinions take deep root. Nothing seems to endanger them so much as tyranny and oppression in the rulers. These tending directly to undermine the opinion of right, (for no man is conceived to have a right to tyrannize over his fellows) leave only in the minds of the people, in favour of their superiors, the opinion of occupancy. Thus one of the great pillars, by which magistracy is supported, the sense of duty, is removed, and the whole weight is left upon the other, the sense of danger. *Virtue*, in that case, we consider either as out of the question, or as in opposition to the powers that be, and consult only *prudence*. Now wherever the present evils of oppression, wherein a people is involved, appear intolerable, and greater than any, or even as great as any which they dread from opposition, the other support, *prudence*, is removed also; and men will both think themselves entitled to revolt, and, after balancing the chances on both sides, be disposed to hazard every thing.

On the other hand, the opinions, which are the great bulwarks of spiritual tyranny, are founded in ignorance and superstition, which are always accompanied with great credulity. Of these, nothing can be so subversive as knowledge and improvement. Virtue, and even piety itself, when its exalted and liberal spirit begins to be understood, become hostile to opinions which, under the sacred name and garb of religion, prove the bane of every virtue, and indeed of every valuable quality in human nature, as well as the nurse of folly and malevolence. Luxury and vice are often pernicious to the best constituted civil governments, because whilst, on one hand, they strengthen and inflame the passions, the great incentives to criminal attempts, they, on the other hand, loosen and undermine our regards to equity and right. But no kind of vice in the people, if accompanied with ignorance, is an enemy, every kind is, on the contrary, a friend to the reign of superstition. Consciousness of profligacy will at times excite terror even in the most obdurate. Superstition, especially when formed into a politic system, like the Romish, is never deficient in expedients for conjuring down that terror, and rendering it subservient to the invariable aim, priestly dominion. It requires but little knowledge in the history of Christendom, to enable us to discover, that many of those persons, both princes and others, most highly celebrated by ecclesiastics as the great benefactors of the church, were the most worthless of the age wherein they lived, the most tyrannical, the most rapacious, the most profligate, men who have concluded a life stained with the blackest crimes, by beggaring their offspring, and devoting all that they had, by way of atoning for their sins, to one of those seminaries of sloth, hypocrisy, and unnatural lusts, commonly called *convents*; or by enhancing, in some other way, the power and wealth of churchmen. Few contributed more to the erection and establishment of the hierarchy than the emperor Phocas; and a greater monster of cruelty and injustice never disgraced the human form.

That the great enemy which superstition has to overcome is *knowledge*, was early perceived by those, who found their account in supporting her throne. Nor were they slack in taking measures for stifling this dangerous foe. Among the chief of

these measures were the following:—1st, They judged it proper to confine to a few those divine illuminations which they could not totally suppress, and which they could not deny had originally been given for the benefit of all. 2dly, When that formidable thing, *knowledge*, in spite of all their efforts, was making progress, they, in order to give it a timely check, affixed a stigma on all the books which tended to expose their artifices, and open the eyes of mankind. 3dly, For the more effectual prevention of this danger, through the terror of example, persecution was employed, which has, in their hands, been digested into an art, and conducted with a cool, determinate, systematic cruelty, that defies alike all the principles of justice and humanity; and of which, among Jews, Mahometans, or Pagans, the world has hitherto furnished us with nothing that deserves to be compared.

In what regards the first method, we comprehend under it the means that have been used to render the scriptures inaccessible to the common people, by discouraging, as much as possible, translations into the vulgar tongue; and, by confining the whole public service to a dead language, thereby rendering it to the congregation no better than insignificant mummery. Nothing is more evident from the scriptures themselves, than that they were written for the benefit of all. Accordingly, all are commanded to read and study them. And indeed, soon after the different books came abroad, one of the first effects of the pious zeal, with which the primitive Christians were inspired was, in every country, to get those inestimable instructions, as soon as possible, accurately translated into the language of the country. It is astonishing to observe how early this was effected in most of the languages then spoken. Indeed, there was nothing in those purer times which could induce any one, who bore the Christian name, to desire either to conceal, or to disguise, the truth. To propagate it in its native purity, and thus diffuse to others the benefit of that light which they themselves enjoyed, was the great ambition, and constant aim, of all the genuine disciples of the Lord Jesus.

As no tongue (the Greek excepted, which is the original of the New Testament) was of so great extent as Latin,—into this a translation seems very early to have been made. It was commonly distinguished by the name *Italic*, probably because

undertaken for the use of the Christians in Italy. It is not known who was the author. This is also the case of most of the old translations. About three centuries after, a new version into Latin was undertaken by Jerom. Our present vulgate consists partly of each, but mostly of the latter. No version whatever could, in early times, be more necessary than one into Latin. This was not the language of Italy only; it had obtained very generally in all the neighbouring countries, which had long remained in subjection to Rome, and in which Roman colonies had been planted. But in the other western churches, where Latin was not spoken by the people, the scriptures were translated into the vernacular idiom of the different nations, soon after their embracing the Christian doctrine. There were, accordingly, Gothic, Frankish, or old German, Anglo-Saxon, and Sclavonic versions. In like manner, in the east, they had very early Syriac, Armenian, Arabic, Persic, Ethiopic, and Coptic. The same may be said of the divine offices, or prayers and hymns, used in public in their churches. It is pretty evident, that for some centuries these were, in all the early converted countries, performed in the language of the people. But in the first ages there were no written liturgies.

Indeed, nothing can be more repugnant to common sense than the contrary practice. For if the people have any concern in those offices, if their joining in the service be of any consequence, it is necessary they should understand what is done: in an unknown tongue, the praises of God, and the praises of Baal, are the same to them. In like manner, in regard to the reading of the scriptures, if the edification of the people be at all concerned, still more if it be the ultimate end, how can it be promoted by the barbarous sounds of a foreign or dead language? How can instructions, covered by such an impenetrable veil, convey knowledge or comfort, produce faith, or secure obedience? The apostle Paul, (1 Cor. xiv.) has been so full and explicit on this head, that it is impossible for all the sophistry, that has been wasted on that passage, to disguise his meaning from any intelligent and ingenuous mind.

"The church," says the Romanist, "by this averseness to "change so much as the external garb, the language of the "usages introduced soon after the forming of a Christian so-

" ciety at Rome, demonstrates her constancy, and inviolable " regard, to antiquity, and consequently ought to inspire us " with a greater confidence in the genuineness and identity of " her doctrine." But so far in fact is this from being an evidence of the constancy of that church, in point of doctrine, that it is no evidence of her constancy even in point of ceremonies. It is the dress, the language only, in which she has been constant, the ceremonies themselves have undergone great alterations, and received immense additions, (as those versed in church history well know) in order to accommodate them to the corruptions in doctrine, which, from time to time, have been adopted. Nor has it been the most inconsiderable motive for preserving the use of a dead language, that the whole service might be more completely in the power of the priesthood, who could thereby, with the greater facility, and without alarming the people, make such alterations in their liturgy, as should, in their ghostly wisdom, be judged proper.

It may at first appear a paradox, but on reflection is manifest, that this mark of their constancy, in what regards the dead letter of the sacred ceremonies, is the strongest evidence of their mutability, nay, actual change, in what concerns the vitals of religion. Consider the reason why Latin was first employed in the Italian churches. It was not the original language of any part of sacred writ. They had the New Testament in the original Greek. There were also forms of public prayer, or liturgies, in that language, before any appeared in Latin. What then could induce them to usher into their churches a fallible translation of the scriptures, in preference to the original, acknowledged to have been written by men divinely inspired, and consequently infallible? I ask this the rather, because the Romanist admits, that the original was written by inspiration. He agrees with us, also, in not affirming the same thing of any version whatever. For, though the council of Trent has pronounced the Latin vulgate to be authentic, it has not declared it perfect, or affirmed that the translator was inspired. By the authenticity, therefore, no more is meant, in the opinion of their most learned doctors, than that it is a good translation, and may be used, by those who understand Latin, safely and profitably. But that this is not considered by themselves as signify-

ing that it is totally exempt from error, is manifest from this, that the critics of that communion use as much freedom in pointing out and correcting its errors, as the learned of this island do, in regard to the common English version. I return to my question, therefore, and ask the Italians, of the present age, Why did their forefathers, in the early ages, prefer a Latin version; a performance executed indeed by pious, but fallible, men, with the aid of human learning, to the Greek original, which they believed to contain the unerring dictates of the Holy Ghost? Why was not the latter read in their churches in preference to the former? The answer which they would return, or which at least their progenitors would have returned, is plain and satisfactory. "We do not dispute that the Greek "was in itself preferable; but to our people it was useless, be- "cause not understood. Latin was their mother tongue. "Much, therefore, of the mind of the Spirit they might learn "from a good Latin version, notwithstanding its imperfections. "Nothing at all could they acquire from hearing the sounds of "a language with which they were unacquainted. And better, "as the apostle says, speak but five words with understanding, "that is, intelligibly, or so as to teach others, than ten thousand, "in an unknown tongue, by which nobody can be edified." Nothing can be more pertinent than this answer, with which Paul has furnished us; only make the application to the case in hand. Latin is not now your native tongue. It is not at present the language of any nation or city in the world. Your people understand it no more now than they do Greek. If the Romans, sixteen hundred years ago, thought it necessary to reject the public use of an infallible original, because unintelligible to the hearers, and to admit in its place a fallible version, because intelligible; and the Romans now refuse to reject one fallible version, that is become unintelligible, for another not more fallible, which may be understood by every body; can there be a stronger demonstration of the total difference of sentiments, in regard to religious worship in the present Romans, from the sentiments of their ancestors in those early ages? Can there, consequently, be a stronger demonstration of the truth of the paradox I mentioned, namely, that this mark of Roman constancy, in what regards the dead letter, is the strongest evi-

dence of their mutability, nay, actual change, in what concerns the vitals of religion? Their ancestors considered religion as a rational service; the present Romans regard it merely as a mechanical operation. The former thought that the understanding had a principal concern in all religious offices: the latter seek only to attach the senses. With them, accordingly, the exercises of public worship are degenerated into a motley kind of pantomime, wherein much passes in dumb show, part is muttered so as not to be audible, part is spoken or chaunted in a strange tongue, so as not to be intelligible; and the whole is made strongly to resemble the performance of magical spells and incantations, to which idea, their doctrine of the *opus operatum* is wonderfully harmonized. But the smallest affinity to the devotions of a reasonable being to his all-wise and almighty Creator, it is impossible to discover in any part of it. Well may we address them, therefore, in the words of Paul to the Galatians, "Oh! infatuated people, who hath bewitched you; "having begun in the Spirit, are ye made perfect by the "flesh?"

If any thing could be more absurd than worship in an unknown tongue, it would be the insult offered to the people's understanding, in pretending to instruct them by reading the scriptures to them in such a tongue. The people are thus mocked with the name of instruction without the thing. They are tantalized by their pastors, who give and withhold at the same time. They appear to impart by pronouncing aloud what they effectually conceal by the language. Like the ancient doctors of the Jewish law, they have taken away the key of knowledge: they entered not in themselves; and those that were entering they hindered. Ah blind guides! Unnatural fathers! for ye affect to be styled fathers, how do ye supply your children with the food of their souls? When they ask bread of you, ye give them a stone. They implore of you spiritual nourishment from the divine oracles, that they may advance in the knowledge of God, in faith and purity, and ye say, or sing to them, a jargon, (for the best things are jargon to him to whom they are unintelligible) which may make them stare, or nod, but must totally frustrate their expectation. They starve, as it were, in the midst of plenty; and are shown their food, but not permitted to taste

it. They seek to have their souls edified, and ye tickle their ears with a song.

If witnesses were necessary to evince the contrariety of this their present practice to the intention of their forefathers, as well as the natural purpose of reading the scriptures in the congregation, I would ask no witness but themselves. They still retain a memorable testimony against themselves, in the form of ordaining readers enjoined in the pontifical, for with them this office is one of the minor orders. In the charge given to the readers by the bishop at their ordination, we have these words: "Studete igitur verba Dei, videlicet lectiones sacras distincte, et "aperte, ad intelligentiam et ædificationem, fidelium, absque "omni mendacio falsitatis proferre; ne veritas divinarum lec-"tionum, incuria vestra, ad instructionem audientium corrumpa-"tur. Quod autem ore legitis, corde credatis, atque opere com-"pleatis; quatenus auditores vestros, *verbo* pariter et exemplo "vestro, docere possitis. Ideoque, dum legitis, in alto loco ec-"clesiæ stetis, ut ab omnibus audiamini et videamini." Instructions entirely apposite when they were first devised, for then Latin was their mother tongue; but which now can serve only as a standing reproach upon their practice, by setting its absurdity in the most glaring point of view. For what can it avail for the edification of the people, that the reader pronounces distinctly and openly, and stands in a conspicuous place, when he pronounces nothing but unmeaning words? Is this teaching them by word, *verbo?* Can this be called addressing the understandings of the faithful? Out of thy own mouth will I judge thee, thou pageant of a teacher.

What shall we say of the power of prepossessions, when an abuse, so palpable, is palliated by such a writer as father Simon? I can bear to hear the most absurd things advanced by weak and illiberal minds. I can make great allowance for the power of education over such, and am led more to pity than to condemn. But it must awake real indignation, to see parts and literature prostituted to the vile purpose of defending what the smallest portion of common sense shows at once to be indefensible, and giving a favourable gloss to the most flagrant abuses and corruptions. Simon acknowledges, (Hist. Crit. des Versions du N. T. chap. 1,) that when Christianity was first plant-

ed, it was found necessary, for the instruction of the people, to translate the scriptures, especially the New Testament, into the language of each country that received this doctrine; and adds, that this remark must be understood as extending to the service performed in the churches, which, in those early days, was every where in the language of the people. The same thing, he affirms, cardinal Bona [a] had observed in his work upon liturgies. Now if the case was so, it will not be easy to account, without recurring to papal usurpations, for the uniformity in using Latin in all the public offices of religion, that had been introduced, and actually obtained, through all the occidental churches, for ages before the reformation. Will Simon say, that Latin was the language of Britain for example, when Christianity was first planted among the Britons; or, indeed, of any of the northern countries of Europe? So far from it, that, for the service of these countries, there were, by his own confession, translations made into Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, Frankish, Sclavonic, &c. Yet these versions (whatever they were formerly) are no where used at present, nor have they been used for many centuries, though fragments of some of them are still to be found in the libraries of the curious.

"Nothing," says Mr. Simon, "is more extravagant, than "what Pierre du Moulin has written on this subject against car-"dinal du Perron. *The end*, says this minister, *which the pope "has proposed to himself, in establishing the Latin tongue in "the public service, has been, to plant amongst his conquered "nations the badges of his empire*; as if," subjoins Simon,

[a] Bona, however, does not say so much as seems here to be attributed to him by Simon. All that his words necessarily denote is, that the apostles, and their successors, in converting the nations, taught the people, and officiated every where, in the idiom of the country. But this does not imply, that they used, for this purpose, either a written translation of the scriptures, or any written liturgy. What he says afterwards, that in all the western churches they had no liturgy but in Latin, evidently implies the contrary. He knew well, that Latin was never the language of the people, in most countries, of the western empire. Even in Africa, where, for manifest reasons, that tongue must have been much more generally spoken than in the northern parts of Europe, he acknowledges, on Augustine's authority, that it was not understood by the common people. "In Africa etiam Latinæ linguæ usus in sacris sem-"per viguit, licet eam populus non intelligeret, ut Augustinus testis est." L. 1. C. v. § 4.

"it had been the popes by whom the Latin language had been "extended throughout all the west." Now to me there appears great extravagance in this censure of Simon's, none in Pierre du Moulin's remark. For if the priest of the Oratory mean, by the Latin being extended throughout the west, that it was become the language of the people in all the western nations, nothing can be more evidently false. It was never the language of Scandinavia, of the greater part of Germany and Gaul; nor was it ever the language of this island in particular. The common language here, at least of the southern part of the island, when the nation was subject to the Romans, was not Latin, but the ancient British, a dialect of the Celtic, which the people, when driven out of the greater and better part of their own country by their conquerors the Saxons, carried with them into Wales; which, in confirmation of what I say, is still spoken there, though, doubtless, in so many ages, considerably altered, and is now called Welsh. The Anglo-Saxon, the language of the invaders, succeeded it, which, after the conquest, being blended with the Norman French, hath settled at last into the present English. The like changes might be shown to have happened in most other European countries. Nor is this hypothesis of Simon's more contrary to fact, than it is inconsistent with his own concessions. For if the Latin had been so widely extended in the west, as his reflection on Pierre du Moulin manifestly implies, where had been the occasion for the versions into Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, Frankish, Sclavonic, &c. of which he himself has made mention.

Further; Mr. Simon's account, that men, after their language had been totally vitiated by the irruptions of barbarians, and the mixture of people that succeeded, still retained the practice of reading the scriptures and liturgies in the language which their forefathers spoke, when Christianity was first introduced among them, is absolutely incompatible with the universal use of Latin for so many ages in the west; and is, consequently, the amplest vindication of the remark of Du Moulin, which he had so severely and unjustly censured. For, on this hypothesis, it would not be Latin in any of the northern countries that would be used in their churches; for Latin never was, in those countries, the language of the people. In Wales it would be ancient

British, in England the Anglo-Saxon, in Sweden the Gothic, in France and Germany the Frankish. Nor can any thing be more foreign to the cause in hand, than the examples brought from the different churches and sects in Asia, who still retain the scriptures in their ancient native tongues. Had all these churches and sects been, by any address or management, induced to employ Greek, some resemblance might have been fairly pleaded; for that language, to say the least, had as great a currency in the east as Latin ever had in the west. Nor do I conceive any thing a stronger evidence of an undue ascendant that one church had obtained over other churches, than that she had influence enough to make them either adopt at once a jargon they did not understand, or, which is worse, abandon their ancient versions, not for the sake of others more intelligible, in the modern language of the people, but to make way for what was to them foreign, as well as unintelligible, being in the language of the Romans.

I can make allowance for the prepossession, though unreasonable, that the present Armenians, Syrians, Copts, and Ethiopians, may retain, for books held venerable by their forefathers, though now no longer understood. For the same reason I can make allowance for the attachment of the people of Italy and its dependencies to the Latin vulgate and ritual, as Latin was once the language of their country. And though it arise in them all from a silly prejudice, which manifestly shows, that the form of religion has supplanted the power; yet I can easily, without recurring to authority or foreign influence, especially in the decline of all literature and science, account for it from the weakness incident to human nature. But totally different is the case of the northern regions, whose language Latin never was, and who, by the confession of Romish critics, once had the scriptures and sacred offices in their native tongues. Their admitting this foreign dress in their religious service, and submitting to wear the livery, and babble the dialect of Rome, is the surest badge of their slavery, and of the triumph of Roman policy over the combined forces of reason and religion both. That the natural consequence of this practice would be to promote ignorance and superstition among the people, it would be a mis-spending of time to attempt to prove.

But would there not be some hazard, that those sage politicians should overshoot the mark? Religion, the Christian religion in particular, has always been understood to require faith in its principles; and faith in principles require some degree of knowledge or apprehension of those principles. If total ignorance should prevail, how could men be said to believe that of which they knew nothing? The schoolmen have devised an excellent succedaneum to supply the place of real belief, which necessarily implies, that the thing believed is, in some sort, apprehended by the understanding. This succedaneum they have denominated *implicit faith*, an ingenious method of reconciling things incompatible, to believe every thing, and to know nothing, not so much as the terms of the propositions which we believe. When the sacred lessons of the gospel were no longer addressed to the understandings of the people; when, in all the public service, they were put off with sound instead of sense: when their eyes and ears were amused, but their minds left uninstructed; it was necessary that something should be substituted for faith, which always presupposes knowledge; nay, that it should be something which might still be called *faith*; for this name had been of so great renown, so long standing, and so universal use, that it was not judged safe entirely to dispossess it. Exactly such a something is *implicit faith*. The name is retained, whilst nobody is incommoded with the thing.

The terms *implicit faith* are used in two different senses. With us protestants, at least in this country, no more is commonly meant by them than the belief of a doctrine, into the truth of which we have made no enquiry, on the bare authority of some person or society declaring it to be true. But this always supposes, that one knows, or has some conception of the doctrine itself. All that is denoted by the term *implicit* in this acceptation is, that in lieu of evidence, one rests on the judgment of him or them by whom the tenet is affirmed. No ignorance is implied but of the proofs. But the *implicit faith* recommended by the schoolmen is quite another thing, and is constituted thus; if you believe that all the religious principles, whatever they be, which are believed by such particular persons, are true; those persons who hold the principles, are explicit believers, you are an implicit believer of all their principles. Nor

is your belief the less efficacious, because you are ignorant of the principles themselves. Perhaps you have never heard them mentioned, or have never enquired about them. For it does not hold here as in the faith whereof the apostle speaks, *How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* In the presence of those profound doctors the schoolmen, the apostle would be found to be no other than an arrant novice. The transcendent excellency of *implicit faith* consists in this, that you have it then in the highest perfection, when, in regard to its object, you know nothing, and have even heard nothing at all. In brief, it is neither more nor less, than being a believer by proxy. Scripture saith, "Ye are saved through faith," and "without faith it is impossible to please God." Now *implicit faith* is a curious device for pleasing God, and being saved by the faith of others. It is, in fact, *imputative faith*, at least as extraordinary as the *imputative justice*, which brought so much obloquy on some of the reformers. It is as if I should call one an *implicit mathematician*, who knows not a tittle of mathematics, not even the definitions and axioms, but is convinced of the knowledge of some other person who is really, or whom he supposes to be, an adept in that science.

"To believe implicitly," says Bona, "is to believe in general universally all that holy mother church believes; so as "to dissent from her in nothing, nor disbelieve any of her articles. And though it be convenient *(licet opportunum sit)* "for all, not only to believe all the articles implicitly, but even "*some* of them, since the coming of Christ, explicitly; yet it is "not necessary *(non tamen est necessarium)* for all, especially "the common people, to believe them *all* explicitly. It is proper rather for those, who assume the office of teaching and "preaching, as they have the cure of souls." Further, to show the wonderful virtues and efficacy of such a faith, another of the doctors, Gabriel Byel, maintains, that "if he who implicitly "believes the church, should think, misled by natural reason, "that the Father is greater than the Son, and existed before "him, or that the three persons are things locally distant from "one another, or the like, he is not a heretic, nor sins, provided he do not defend his error pertinaciously. For he be"lieves what he does believe, because he thinks that the church

"believes so, subjecting his opinion to the faith of the church. "For though his opinion be erroneous, his opinion is not his "faith, nay, his faith, in contradiction to his opinions, is the "faith of the church. What is still more, this *implicit faith* "not only defends from heresy and sin, but even constitutes "merit in heterodoxy itself, and preserves in that merit one "who forms a most heterodox opinion, because he thinks the "church believes so." Thus far Byel. It is then of no consequence what a man's explicit faith be; he may be an Arian, a Socinian, an Anthropomorphite, a Polytheist, in short, any thing; he cannot err, whilst he has an implicit faith in the church. This they give as their explanation of that article of the creed, "I believe in the holy catholic church;" though, agreeably to this interpretation, there should have been no other article in the creed. This point alone supersedes every other, and is the quintessence of all. *Implicit faith* has been sometimes ludicrously styled *fides carbonaria*, from the noted story of one who, examining an ignorant collier on his religious principles, asked him what it was that he believed. He answered, "I believe what the church believes." The other rejoined, "What then does the church believe?" He replied readily, "The church believes what I believe." The other desirous, if possible, to bring him to particulars, once more resumes his inquiry: "Tell me then, I pray you, what it is which you and "the church both believe." The only answer the collier could give was, "Why truly, Sir, the church and I both—be-"lieve the same thing." This is implicit faith in perfection, and in the estimation of some celebrated doctors, the sum of necessary and saving knowledge in a Christian.

It is curious to consider the inferences, which they themselves deduce from this wonderful doctrine. A person, on first hearing them, would take them for the absurd consequences objected by an adversary, with a view to expose the notion of *implicit faith* as absolutely nonsensical. But it is quite otherwise; they are deductions made by friends, who are very serious in supporting them. One of these is, that a man may believe two propositions perfectly contradictory at the same time, one explicitly, the other implicitly. Another is, that in such a case, the implicit, (which, to a common understanding, appears to include

no belief at all,) not the explicit, is to be accounted his religious faith. "It may be," says Gabriel, "that one may believe "implicitly a certain truth, and explicitly believe the contrary." Put the case that a man believes, that whatever the church believes is true; at the same time disbelieving this proposition, *Abraham had more wives than one*, and believing the contrary, as thinking it the belief of the church; such a man implicitly believes this proposition, *Abraham had two wives*, because the church believes so, and explicitly he disbelieves it. Now the great virtue of implicit faith in the church lies here, that it saves a man from all possible danger, in consequence of any explicit erroneous opinions, and renders, it, indeed, unnecessary in him to be solicitous to know whether his opinions be right or wrong, orthodox or heterodox. No wonder, then, that the utility of this simple principle is so highly celebrated by the schoolmen. "Hæc fides implicita, qua fidelis credit quicquid ecclesia credit, "utilissima est fideli. Nam si fuerit in corde, defendit ab "omni hæretica pravitate, ut dicit Occam in tractata de sacra-"mentis, et post eum Gerson. Non enim aliquatenus hæreti-"cari valet, qui corde credit quicquid ecclesia catholica credit, "id est, qui credit illam veritatem, *quicquid ecclesia credit est "verum.*" And, indeed, its efficacy must be the same, as the reason is the same, in protecting from the consequences of every error, even in the most fundamental points, as in protecting from what might ensue on that trifling error, that Abraham had but one wife.

We must at least confess not only the consistency, but even the humanity of the Romish system, in this amazing method of simplifying all the necessary knowledge and faith of a Christian. For surely, when the means of knowledge were, in effect, put out of the reach of the people; when in public they were tantalized with the mere parade of teaching, by having instructions chaunted to them in an unknown tongue; when it was not the understanding, but the senses solely, which were employed in religious offices; when every thing rational and edifying was excluded from the service; it would have been unconscionable, worse than even the tyranny of Egyptian taskmasters, to require of the people any thing like real faith, which always presupposes some information given, and some knowledge acquired, of the

subject. A merely nominal faith (and such entirely is this scholastic fiction of implicit faith) suited much better a merely mechanical service. In this manner the knowledge of God, which is declared in scripture to be more valuable than burnt offerings, and faith in him, and in the doctrine of revelation, are superseded, to make room for an unbounded submission to, and confidence in men, to wit, those ghostly instructors, whom the populace must invariably regard as the mouth of the unerring church.

I would not, however, be understood as signifying by what has been now advanced on the subject of implicit faith, that in this point all Romanists are perfectly agreed. What I have adduced is supported by great names among their doctors, and mostly quoted in their words. Nor was the doctrine, though every where publicly taught in their schools and in their writings, ever censured by either pope or council, ecumenical or provincial. But though all the Romish doctors pay great deference, they do not all, I acknowledge, pay equal deference to implicit faith. Some seem to think it sufficient for every thing; others are curious in distinguishing what those articles are, whereof an explicit faith is requisite, and what those are, on the other hand, whereof an implicit faith will answer. But it is not necessary here to enter into their scholastic cavils.

So much shall suffice for the first expedient employed by *superstition* for the suppression of her deadly foe *knowledge*, which is, by perverting the rational service of religion into a mere amusement of the senses.

LECTURE XXIV.

But though by such means as those now illustrated, religious knowledge might long be kept low, it was not so easy a matter to suppress it altogether. Such a variety of circumstances have an influence on its progress, that when the things which have been long in confusion begin to settle, it is impossible to guard every avenue against its entrance. One particular art, and one particular branch of science, has a nearer connection with other arts and other branches of science than is commonly imagined. If you would exclude one species of knowledge totally, it is not safe to admit any. This, however, is a point of political wisdom, which, luckily, has not been sufficiently understood even by politicians. When the western part of the Roman empire was overrun, and rather desolated than conquered by barbarians; matters, after many long and terrible conflicts, came by degrees to settle; and several new states and new kingdoms arose out of the stupendous ruin. As these came to assume a regular form, the arts of peace revived, and were cultivated; knowledge of course revived with them. Of all kinds of knowledge, I own that religious knowledge was the latest. And that it should be so, we cannot be surprised, when we consider the many terrible clogs by which it was borne down. But notwithstanding these, the progress of letters could not fail to have an influence even here. History, languages, criticism, all tended to open the eyes of mankind, and disclose the origin of many corruptions and abuses in respect of sacred as well as profane literature. How much this was accelerated by the invention of printing, which renders the communication of knowledge so easy, bringing it within the reach of those to whom it was inaccessible before, it would be superfluous to attempt to prove. Suffice it to remark, that towards the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, the visible face of things in Europe was,

in respect of cultivation, and the liberal as well as useful arts, very much altered.

The change had been insensibly advancing for some centuries before. As this was an indication of a second dawn of reason, and the return of thought, after a long night of barbarity and ignorance, it proved the means of preparing the minds of men for a corresponding change in greater matters. Indeed, there began to be disseminated such a dissatisfaction with the corruptions that had invaded all the provinces of religion, that murmurs and complaints were almost universal. In every part of Christendom, the absolute necessity of a reformation in the church was become a common topic. It is true, the clamour regarded chiefly discipline and manners, but by no means solely. It had, indeed, long before that time, been rendered very unsafe to glance at received doctrines, though in the most cursory, or even guarded manner. Yet it was impossible, that the abuses in practice should not lead to those errors in principle, which had proved the parents of those abuses. The increase of knowledge brought an increase of curiosity. The little that men had discovered, raised an insatiable appetite for discovering more. The increase of knowledge, by undeceiving men in regard to some inveterate prejudices, occasioned, not less infallibly, the decrease of credulity; and the decrease of credulity sapped the very foundations of sacerdotal power. Now as the principal means of conveying knowledge was by books, the spiritual powers were quickly led to devise proper methods for stopping the progress of those books, which might prove of dangerous consequence to their pretensions.

This was the second expedient above-mentioned, adopted by superstition, or rather by spiritual tyranny, of whose throne superstition is the chief support, for checking the progress of knowledge. The origin and growth of this expedient, till it arrived at full maturity, I shall relate to you nearly in the terms of a celebrated writer, to whom I have oftener than once had recourse before. In the earliest ages of the church, though there was no ecclesiastical prohibition in regard to books, pious persons, from a principle of conscience, always thought it right to avoid reading bad books, that they might not transgress the sense of the divine law, which prohibits us from spending the

time unprofitably, and which commands us to abstain from all appearance of evil, to avoid every thing by which we may be led, without necessity, to expose ourselves to temptation, and be drawn into sin. These are obligations arising from the principles of the law of nature, and therefore perpetually in force. We are all, doubtless, obliged, though there were no ecclesiastical law to that purpose, to beware of mis-spending the precious hours in the perusal of worthless writings. But, in process of time, when these considerations were less minded than at the beginning, Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, a celebrated doctor, about the year 240, being reproved by his own presbyters, for reading books which they accounted dangerous, found it convenient to plead in his excuse, that his doubts on this head had been removed by a vision, wherewith he had been favoured from heaven, which permitted him to read any book, because he had discernment sufficient to enable him to do it with safety. It was, however, the general opinion in those days, that there was greater danger in the books of pagans, than in those of heretics, which were much abhorred.

The reading of the former, the Greek and the Latin books which we now call classics, was most severely censured, not as being intrinsically worse than the other, but because those books were more engaging, and the reading of them was more frequently practised by many Christian doctors, through a desire of learning eloquence, and the rules of composition. And, for indulging himself in this practice, Jerom was said to have been either in vision, or in dream, buffeted by the devil. Much about that time, to wit, in the year 400, a council in Carthage prohibited the bishops from reading the books of Gentiles, but permitted them to read those of heretics. This is the first prohibition in form of a canon. Nor is there any thing else, on this subject, to be found in the fathers, except in the way of advice, on the general principles of the divine law, as represented above.

The books of the heretics, whose doctrine had been condemned by councils, were indeed often, for political reasons, prohibited by the emperors. Thus Constantine prohibited the books of Arius. Arcadius those of the Eunomians and Manichees. Theodosius those of Nestorius, and Martian the writ-

ings of the Eutychians. In Spain, king Ricaredo prohibited those of the Arians. Councils and bishops thought it sufficient to declare what books contained doctrine condemned or apocryphal. They proceeded no further, leaving it to the conscience of every one either to avoid them entirely, or to read them with a good intention. After the year 800, the Roman pontiffs, who had usurped the greater part of ecclesiastical government, expressly forbade men to read, nay, gave orders to burn the books whose authors they had condemned as guilty of heresy. Nevertheless, till the age of the reformation, the number of books actually prohibited was but small.

The general papal prohibition, on pain of excommunication, and without any other sentence, to all those who read books containing the doctrine of heretics, or of persons suspected of heresy, was grown into disuse. Martin V., in his bull, excommunicated all heretical sects, especially Wickliffites and Hussites; but made no mention of those who read their books, though many of them were then every where circulated. Leo X., when he condemned Luther, prohibited, at the same time, on pain of excommunication, the keeping and the reading of his books. The succeeding pontiffs, in the bull called *in cæna*, having condemned and excommunicated all heretics, did, together with them, excommunicate all those who read their books. This produced greater confusion, because the heretics not being condemned by name, the books would be discovered rather by the quality of the doctrine contained in them, than by the names of their authors. Now the quality of the doctrine contained could not be known till the book was read, and consequently, till the excommunication was incurred, if the doctrine was heretical. Besides, the doctrine might appear very different to different readers. Hence arose innumerable scruples in the minds of those weak but conscientious persons, who paid an implicit deference to the authority of the church. The inquisitors, who were more diligent than others, made catalogues of such as came to their knowledge, which, however, as the copies taken of those catalogues were not collated, did not entirely remove the difficulty. King Philip of Spain was the first who gave them a more convenient form, having enacted a law in 1558, that the catalogue of books, prohibited by the Spanish inquisition, should

be printed. After this example, Paul IV. ordered the inquisition in Rome to prepare, and cause to be printed, an index of books proper to be forbidden, which was executed in the following year 1559. In this they proceeded much farther than had ever been done before, and laid the foundations of a very curious system of policy, for maintaining and exalting, to the utmost, the authority of the court of Rome, by depriving men of the knowledge necessary for defending themselves against her usurpations.

Hitherto the prohibition had been confined to the books of heretics, nor had any book been prohibited whose author had not been condemned. They now judged it expedient to go more boldly to work. Accordingly, the new index, which, from its known purpose, came to be called *index expurgatorius*, was divided into three parts. The first contained the names of those authors, whose whole works, whether the subject were sacred or profane, were forbidden; and in this number are included not only those who have professed a doctrine contrary to that of Rome, but even many who continued all their life, and died in her communion. In the second part were contained the names of particular books which are condemned, though other books of the same authors be not. In the third, beside some anonymous writings specified, there is one general rule, whereby all those books are forbidden, which do not bear the author's name, published since the year 1519. Nay, many authors and books are condemned, which for three hundred, two hundred, or one hundred years, had passed through the hands of all the men of letters in the church, and of which the Roman pontiffs had been in the knowledge for so long a time without finding fault. Nay, what is still more extraordinary, some modern books were included in the prohibition, which had been printed in Italy, even in Rome, with the approbation of the inquisitors, nay, of the pope himself, signified by his brief accompanying the publication. Of this kind are the annotations of Erasmus on the New Testament, to which Leo X., after having read them, gave his approbation, in a brief, dated at Rome 1518. Above all, it is worthy of notice, that under colour of faith and religion, those books are prohibited, and their authors condemned, wherein the authority of princes and civil magistrates is defended against ec-

clesiastical usurpations; those wherein the authority of bishops and councils is defended against the usurpations of the court of Rome; and those wherein are disclosed the tyranny and hypocrisy with which, under pretence of religion, the people are abused either by deceit, or by violence. In brief, a better expedient was never devised, (had it been a little more capable of being carried into effect) for employing religion, so as to divest men not only of all knowledge, but of every vestige of rationality. So far did the Roman inquistion, at that time, proceed, that they made a list of sixty-two printers, prohibiting all the books printed by them, of whatever author, subject, or language, with an additional clause still more comprehensive, to wit, and all the books printed by other such like printers, who have printed the books of heretics. In consequence of which, there hardly remained any books to read. Nay, to show the incredible excess of their rigour, the prohibition of every book, contained in the catalogue, was on pain of excommunication to the reader *ipso facto*, reserving to the pope the power of inflicting the deprivation of offices, and benefices, incapacitation, perpetual infamy, and other arbitrary pains. Thus was the court of Rome, in defence, as was falsely pretended, of the doctrine of Christ, but in reality of her own despotism, as the Turks and Saracens, in defence of the superstition of the impostor Mahomet, engaged in a war against literature and knowledge, tending evidently to the extermination of arts and sciences, and to the transformation of men, in every thing but external form, into brutes. And, with equal reason, was this the aim of both mahometism and popery. False religion, of every kind, must be a mortal enemy to knowledge: for nothing is more certain, than that knowledge is a mortal enemy to all false religion.

How similar have been the aims and the pretensions of pagan and of papal Rome! Both aspired, and with amazing success, at universal empire. But how dissimilar have been the means employed for the attainment of the end. The former, pagan Rome, secured the superiority which her arms had gained, by diffusing knowledge, and civilizing the conquered nations: thus making, as it were, compensation to them by her arts for the injustice she had done them by her arms. The latter, papal Rome, who, for a long time indeed, employed more fraud than

violence, (though far from rejecting the aid of either,) secured her conquests by lulling the people in ignorance, diverting their curiosity with monstrous legends, and monkish tales, and by doing what she could to render and keep them barbarians.

In regard to the expedient, of which I have here been treating, the prohibition of books by an index expurgatorius, there seem to have been two capital errors in Rome's method of managing this affair, notwithstanding her political wisdom. But nothing human is on all sides perfect. One was, that she was some centuries too late in adopting this measure, It would be difficult to say what might have been effected, had the attempt been earlier made, and supported with her usual firmness. The other error was, that things had proceeded too far for so violent a remedy. Had less been attempted, more would have been attained. The inquisitors, in the true spirit of their calling, and in compliance with the impetuous temper of the reigning pontiff, breathed nothing but extirpation and perdition. They had not so much knowledge of legislation as to perceive, that when a certain point is exceeded in the severity of laws, they are actually enfeebled by what was intended to invigorate them. Hardly was there a man that could read, who was not involved in the excommunication denounced by an act so extravagant. Nor could any thing render the sentence more contemptible, or prove a greater bar to its execution, than its being made thus to comprehend almost every body.

This error was quickly perceived. Recourse was had, not without effect, to Paul's successor, Pius the fourth, who, being a man of more temper than his predecessor, remitted to the council of Trent, then sitting, the consideration of the affair. They, accordingly, committed to some of the fathers and doctors the examination of suspected books, and the revisal and correction of that absurd act of pope Paul, acknowledging, that it had produced scruples, and given cause for complaints. Since that time, the prohibitory laws, though, in other respects, far from being more moderate, have avoided the most exceptionable of those indefinite and comprehensive clauses complained of in the former; and I suspect, have by consequence proved more effectual, at least in Italy and Spain, in retarding the progress of knowledge.

Indeed, for some ages past, no heresy has appeared so damnable in Italy to the ghostly fathers, to whom the revisal of books is entrusted, as that which ascribes any kind of authority to magistrates, independent of the pope: no doctrine so divine, as that which exalts the ecclesiastical authority above the civil, not only in spiritual matters, but in secular. Nay, the tenet on this subject, in highest vogue with the canonists, is that which stands in direct opposition to the apostle Paul's. The very pinnacle of orthodoxy with those gentlemen is, that the lawful commands of the civil magistrate do not bind the conscience; that our only motive to obedience here is prudence, from fear of the temporal punishment denounced by him; and that, if we have the address to elude his vigilance, and escape the punishment, our disobedience is no sin in the sight of God. It is impossible for any thing to be more flatly contradictory to the doctrine of all antiquity, particularly that of the great apostle, who commands us to be subject to those powers, not only for fear of their wrath, but for conscience sake. It was lucky for Paul, the apostle I mean, not the pope, that he had published his sentiments, on this subject, about 1500 years before that terrible expedient of the *index* was devised. He had, by this means, obtained an authority in the Christian world, which Rome herself, though she may, where her influence is greatest, for a time, elude it, cannot totally destroy. Otherwise that missionary of Christ must have long ago had a place in the index expurgatorius.

But to return; Rome has obstructed the progress of knowledge, not only by suppressing altogether books not calculated to favour her views, but by reprinting works, which had too great a currency for them to suppress, mutilated and grossly adulterated. Those editions, when they came abroad, being for the most part neatly, many of them elegantly, printed, and well executed, were ignorantly copied by the printers of other countries, who knew not their defects. In this way those corruptions have been propagated. Besides, Rome wants not her instruments in most countries, protestant as well as popish, such as priests and confessors, who are always ready to lend their assistance in forwarding her views. Hence it is often rendered extremely difficult to distinguish the genuine editions from the

spurious. For let it be observed, that their visitors of books do not think it enough to cancel whatever displeases them in the authors they examine: they even venture to foist in what they judge proper, in the room of what they have expunged. In the year 1607, the *index expurgatorius*, published at Rome, specified and condemned all the obnoxious places in certain authors, which were judged worthy to be blotted out. This, to those who possess that *index*, shows plainly what were the things which, in several authors of reputation, were either altered or erased. But such indexes, which, in the hands of a critic, would prove extremely useful for restoring old books to their primitive purity and integrity, are now to be found only in the libraries of a very few, in the southern parts of Europe. Whether there be any of them in this island I cannot say. But the consequence of the freedom, above related, which has been taken by the court of Rome with Christian writers of the early ages, (for it luckily did not answer their purpose to meddle with the works of pagans) has rendered it, at this day, almost impossible to know the real sentiments of many old authors of great name, both ecclesiastics and historians: there being of several of them scarcely any edition extant at present, except those which have been so miserably garbled by the court of Rome, or, which amounts to the same thing, editions copied from those which they had vitiated by their interpolations and corrections.

But what would appear the most incredible of all, if the act were not still in being, pope Clement VIII. in the year 1595, in his catalogue of forbidden books, published a decree, that all the books of catholic authors, written since the year 1515, should be corrected, not only by retrenching what is not conformable to the doctrine of Rome, but also by adding what may be judged proper by the correctors. That ye may see I do not wrong him, (for that, in corruptions of this kind they should be so barefaced is indeed beyond belief) it is necessary to subjoin his own words: *In libris catholicorum recentiorum, qui post annum Christianæ salutis 1515 conscripti sint, si id quod corrigendum occurrit, paucis demptis aut additis emendari posse videatur, id correctores faciendum curent; sin minus omnino deleatur.* The reason why the year 1515 is particularly specified, as that after which the writings, even of Roman Catholics, were

to undergo a more strict examination and scrutiny than any published by such before, is plainly this: It was in the year immediately following, that Luther began to declaim against indulgences, which proved the first dawn of the reformation. His preaching and publications produced a very hot controversy. Now many of those who defended what was called the catholic cause, and strenuously maintained the perfect purity of the church's doctrine, did not hesitate to acknowledge corruptions in her discipline, and particularly in the conduct of Rome, which needed to be reformed. They affected to distinguish between the court and the church of Rome, a distinction no way palatable to the former. Now it would have been exceedingly imprudent to suppress those controversial pieces altogether, especially at that time, when they were universally considered as being, and in fact were, the best defence of the Romish cause against the encroachments of protestantism, and the reformation. On the other hand, the concessions made in them, in regard to discipline, and the court of Rome, and the distinctions they contained, bore an aspect very unfavourable to Romish despotism. Hence the determination of correcting them, not only by expunging what was not relished at court, but by altering and inserting whatever was judged proper to alter, or insert, by the ruling powers in the church. Authors had been often falsified before, and made to say what they never meant, nay, the reverse of what they actually said; but of a falsification so imprudently conducted, this of pope Clement was the first example. Their interpolations, however, of the works even of Roman Catholics, though not so avowedly made, have by no means been confined to those who have written since the year 1515. Platina, a writer of the fifteenth, and therefore of the former century, who gave the world a history of the popes, though far from being unfavourable to the pretensions of Rome, has not escaped unhurt their jealous vigilance. For though he had said very little, as Bower well observes, that could be suspected of being any way offensive, that *very little* has been thought too much. Accordingly, he has been taught, in all the editions of his work, since the middle of the sixteenth century, to speak with more reserve, and to suppress, or disguise, some truths which he had formerly told.

Hence it happens, that in regard to all the books which have passed through the hands of Roman licensers, or inquisitors, we can conclude nothing from what we find in them, in regard to the sentiments of their authors, but solely in regard to the sentiments of Rome, to an exact conformity to which, it was judged necessary, that by all possible methods of squeezing and wrenching, maiming, and interpolating, they should be brought. Nor has the revisal been confined to books written on religious subjects, but extended to all subjects, politics, history, works of science, and of amusement. Nay, what is more, the pope came at last to claim it as an exclusive privilege, to prohibit, and to license, not for Rome only, and the ecclesiastical state, but for all Christendom, at least for all the countries wherein his authority is acknowledged, insisting, that what he prohibits, no prince whatever, even in his own dominions, dares license, and what he licenses, none dares prohibit. The first of these has been generally conceded to him, though not perhaps punctually obeyed.

The second occasioned a violent struggle in the beginning of the last century, between the pope and the king of Spain, on occasion of a book written by cardinal Baronius, containing many things in derogation of that monarch's government and title, and traducing, with much asperity, many of his ancestors, the kings of Arragon. The book was licensed at Rome, but prohibited in the Spanish dominions. The monarch stood firm in his purpose, and the pope thought fit to drop the controversy, but not to renounce the claim. This Rome never does, actuated by a political maxim formerly suggested, of which she has often availed herself when a proper opportunity appeared. A more particular account of this contest ye have in father Paul's discourse on the constitution and rules of the inquisition at Venice. How great would be the consequence of this papal privilege, if universally acquiesced in, any person of reflection will easily conceive. Who knows not the power of first impressions on any question, the influence of education, and the force of habit, in riveting opinions formed in consequence of being uniformly accustomed to attend to one side only of the question. All these advantages the pontiff would have clearly in his favour, could he but secure to himself that high prerogative, and become, in effect, our supreme or only teacher.

LECTURE XXV.

Having discussed, in the two preceding lectures, what relates to the concealment of scripture, and of all the public offices of religion, by the use of an unknown tongue, and to the check given to the advancement of knowledge by the *index expurgatorius*, I intend, in this discourse, to consider the third grand expedient adopted by Rome for securing the implicit obedience of her votaries, namely, persecution.

Nothing is clearer, from the New Testament, than that this method of promoting the faith is totally unwarranted, as well by the great author, as by the first propagators of our religion. His disciples were sent out as sheep amidst wolves, exposed to the most dreadful persecutions, but incapable of ever giving to their enemies a return in kind, in a consistency with this signature of Christ's servants: for in no change of circumstances will it suit the nature of the sheep to persecute the wolf. As it was not an earthly kingdom which our Lord came to establish, so it was not by carnal weapons that his spiritual warfare was to be conducted. The means must be adapted to the end. *My kingdom*, said he, *is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight.* Worldly weapons are suited to the conquest of worldly kingdoms. But nothing can be worse adapted to inform the understanding, and conquer the heart, than such coarse implements. Lactantius says with reason, *Defendenda est religio non occidendo, sed moriendo, non sævitia, sed patientia.* To convince, and to persuade, both by teaching and by example, was the express commission given to the apostles. The only weapons which they were to employ, or which could be employed, for this purpose, were arguments and motives from reason and scripture. Their only armour, faith and patience, prudence and innocence, the comforts arising from the consciousness of doing their duty, and the unshaken hope of the promised reward. By means of this panoply, however

lightly it may be accounted of by those who cannot look beyond the present scene, they were, in the spiritual, that is, the most important sense, invulnerable; and by means of their faith, as the spring which set all their other virtues in motion, they obtained a victory over the world.

Beside the declared enemies from without, pagans and infidel Jews, whom Christians had, from the beginning, to contend with, there arose very early, in the bosom of the church, as had been foretold by the apostles, certain internal foes, first to the primitive simplicity of Christian doctrine, and afterwards, by a natural progress, to the unity, sympathy, and love, which, as members of the same society, having one common head, they were under the strongest obligations to observe inviolate. From the very commencement of the church, the tares of error had by divine permission, for the exercise and probation of the faithful, been sown among the good seed of the word. The only remedies which had been prescribed by the apostles against those who made divisions in the Christian community, founding new sects, which commonly distinguished themselves by the profession of some erroneous doctrine, or at least some idle and unedifying speculation, were, first, repeatedly to admonish them, and afterwards, when admonitions should prove ineffectual, to renounce their company, that is, to exclude them from their brotherhood, or excommunicate them: for the original import of these expressions is nearly the same. On this footing matters remained till Constantine, in the beginning of the fourth century, embraced the faith, and gave the church a sort of political establishment in the empire.

From the apologies of the fathers before that period, (so the defences of our religion written by them are named) it is evident, that they universally considered persecution for any opinions, whether true or false, as the heighth of injustice and oppression. Nothing can be juster than the sentiment of Tertullian, which was, indeed, as far as appears, the sentiment of all the fathers of the first three centuries. "Non religionis est "cogere religionem, quæ sponte suscipi debeat, non vi." And to the same purpose Lactantius, "Quis imponat mihi necessi-"tatem vel colendi quod nolim, vel quod velim non colendi? "Quid jam nobis ulterius relinquitur, si etiam hoc, quod vo-

"luntate fieri opportet, libido extorqueat aliena?" Again, "Non est opis vi et injuria; quia religio cogi non potest, verbis "potius quam verberibus res agenda est, ut sit voluntas." Once more, "Longe diversa sunt carnificina et pietas, nec potest aut "veritas cum vi, aut justitia cum crudelitate, conjungi." Their notions, in those days, in regard to civil government, seem also to have been much more correct than they became soon after. For all Christians, in the ages of the martyrs, appear to have agreed in this, that the magistrate's only object ought to be the peace and temporal prosperity of the commonwealth.

But (such alas! is the depravity of human nature) when the church was put on a different footing, men began, not all at once, but gradually, to change their system in regard to those articles, and seemed strongly inclined to think, that there was no injustice in retaliating upon their enemies, by employing those unhallowed weapons in defence of the true religion, which had been so cruelly employed in support of a false: not considering, that by this dangerous position, that one may justly persecute in support of the truth, the right of persecuting for any opinions will be effectually secured to him who holds them, provided he have the power. For what is every man's immediate standard of orthodoxy but his own opinions? And if he have a right to persecute in support of them, because of the ineffable importance of sound opinions to our eternal happiness, it must be even his duty to do it when he can. For if that interest, the interest of the soul and eternity, come at all within the magistrate's province, it is unquestionably the most important part of it. Now as it is impossible he can have any other immediate directory, in regard to what is orthodox, but his own opinions, and as the opinions of different men are totally different, it will be incumbent, by the strongest of all obligations, on one magistrate to persecute in support of a faith, which it is equally incumbent on another by persecution to destroy. Should ye object, that the standard is not any thing so fleeting as opinion; it is the word of God, and right reason. This, if ye attend to it, will bring you back to the very same point which ye seek to avoid. The dictates both of scripture and of reason, we see but too plainly, are differently interpreted by different persons, of whose sincerity we have no ground to doubt. Now to every individual,

that only, amongst all the varieties of sentiments, can be his rule, which, to the best of his judgment, that is, in his opinion, is the import of either. Nor is there a possibility of avoiding the recurrence at last. But such is the intoxication of power, that men, blinded by it, will not allow themselves to look forward to those dreadful consequences. And such is the presumption of vain man, (of which bad quality the weakest judgments have commonly the greatest share,) that it is with difficulty any one person can be brought to think, that any other person has, or can have, as strong conviction of a different set of opinions, as he has of his.

But to return to our narrative. When the secular powers had changed sides, and were now come to be on the side of Christianity, this was the manner, on the subject of religion, in which some men among the clergy began to argue. Princes ought to be considered in a twofold capacity; one is, that of Christians, the other, that of princes, in both which characters they are bound to serve God: as Christians, by observing the divine commandments, like every other disciple of Christ: as princes, by purging the church of all schisms, heresies, and blasphemies, punishing all transgressors of the divine precepts, but more especially those who, by the transgressions above mentioned, violate the first table of the decalogue; for as those sins are committed more immediately against God, they are much more heinous than theft, adultery, murder, or any sins committed against our neighbour. Now under the general denomination of sins of the first table, every sect (were their verdicts to be severally taken) would comprehend almost all the distinguishing tenets of every other sect. And though, in support of their plea, they might have many specious things to advance, they would all be found to lean on a false hypothesis.

First, it is false, that the concerns of the soul and eternity fall under the cognizance and jurisdiction of the magistrate. To say that they do, is to blend the very different and hardly compatible characters of magistrate and pastor in the same person; or, which is worse, to graft the latter upon the former, the sure method of producing a most absurd and cruel despotism, such as obtains in all Mahometan countries: nor is that much better which prevails more or less in popish countries, especially

in the ecclesiastical state, and in Spain and Portugal, where the magistrate is grafted on the pastor, or rather on the priest.

Secondly, it is false, that spiritual concerns, if they did fall under the cognizance of the magistrate, are capable of being regulated by such expedients as are proper for restraining the injuries of violence and fraud, and preserving tranquillity and good order in society. Though, by coercion, crimes, which are outward and overt acts, may effectually be restrained, it is not by coercion that those inward effects can be produced, conviction in the understanding, or conversion in the heart. Now these in religion are all in all. By racks and gibbets, fire and faggot, we may as rationally propose to mend the sight of a man who squints, or is purblind, as by these means to enlighten the infidel's or the heretic's understanding, confute his errors, and bring him to the belief of what he disbelieved before. That by such methods he may be constrained to profess what he disbelieves still, nobody can deny, or even doubt. But to extort a hypocritical profession, is so far from being to promote the cause of God and religion, that nothing, by the acknowledgment of men of all parties can stand more directly in opposition to it. *Nihil est tam voluntarium quam religio*, says Lactantius, *in qua si animus sacrificantis aversus est, jam sublata, jam nulla est.*

Thirdly, it is a false, though a very common notion, that errors concerning the divine nature and perfections ought to be denominated blasphemies, or considered as civil crimes. Blasphemy, in regard to God, corresponds to calumny in regard to man. The original name for both is the same. As the latter always implies what, in the language of the law, is called *malus animus*, a disposition to calumniate, so does the former. Mere mistake, in regard to character, especially when the mistake is not conceived, by him who entertains it, to derogate from the character, constitutes neither of those crimes. That no imputation, however, is commoner, can be ascribed solely to that malevolence, which bigotry and contention never fail to produce. Thus the arminian and the calvinist, the protestant and the papist, the jesuit and the jansenist, throw and retort on each other the unchristian reproach of blasphemy. Yet each is so far from intending to lessen, in the opinion of others, the honour of the divine majesty, that he is fully convinced that his own principles

are better adapted to raise it than those of his antagonist, and for that very reason he is so strenuous in maintaining them. But to blacken, as much as possible, the designs of an antagonist, in order the more easily to bring odium on his opinions, is the too common, though detestable, resource of theological controvertists [a].

I proceed to show the advances which, from time to time, were made, till that system of persecution which, in a great part of the world, still obtains, was brought to maturity, and established. For ages after the opinion first took place among Christians, that it was the magistrate's duty to restrain heretics by the infliction of civil penalties, they retained so much moderation as not to think that the punishment could justly extend to death, or mutilation, or even to the effusion of blood. But now that the empire was become Christian, there gradually arose in it diverse laws against this new crime *heresy*, which are still extant in the codes of Theodosian and Justinian, imposing on the delinquents fines, banishments, or confiscations, according to the circumstances, and supposed degree, of the delinquency. All that regarded the execution of those laws, the trial, as well as the sentence, devolved on the magistrate. Only the nature of the crime, what was heresy or schism, was determined by the ecclesiastical judge. One step in an evil course naturally leads to another. The first step was made when civil penalties were denounced against particular opinions and modes of thinking. This may be considered as the first stage of the doctrine and practice of intolerance, in the Christian church. Nor could any thing be more explicitly, or more universally, condemned than this had been, by the fathers of the first three centuries, and several of the fourth. *Humani juris et naturalis potestatis est*, said Tertullian, in the beginning of the third century, *unicuique quod putaverit colere*, and Hilary of Poitiers, in the fourth, in opposition to those who favoured the interposition of the magistrate. *Deus cognitionem sui docuit, potius quam exegit, et operationum cœlestium admiratione, præceptis suis concilians auctoritatem coactam confiten-*

[a] For the scripture import of blasphemy, and the nature of that crime, see "Preliminary Dissertations to a Version of the Four Gospels," by the Author, vol. I. p. 395, &c.

di se aspernatus est voluntatem. Again, *Deus universitatis est, obsequio non eget necessario, non requirit coactam confessionem; non fallendus est sed promerendus, simplicitate quærendus est, confessione discendus est, charitate amandus est,* timore venerandus est, *voluntatis probitate retinendus est. At vero quid istud, quod sacerdotes timere Deum vinculis coguntur, pœnis jubentur? Sacerdotes carceribus continentur?* Men's system of conduct may come, we see, to be totally reversed. But this is always the work of time. Every advance has its difficulty, and is made with hesitation. But one difficulty surmounted emboldens a man, and renders it easier for him to surmount another. That again makes way for the next, and so on till the change be total.

Several bishops and pastors, who had not yet been able to divest themselves of the more pure and harmless maxims of primitive times, or rather of their divine master, who totally reprobated all secular weapons in this warfare, thought, that after they had declared opinions heretical, and denied their communion to those who held them, they could not innocently intermeddle further, or give information to the magistrate, dreading that such a conduct would be irreconcileable to the great law of charity. Others more hardy, (for there will always be such differences among men) resolved, by any means, to silence such as they could not confute, and to compel those to dissemble, whom they despaired of convincing: the plain language of which conduct was, if we cannot make them better, we will make them worse,—if they will not be believers, they shall be hypocrites. And whoever will not be induced to be of what we account the family of God, we shall be sure to render twofold more the children of the devil than they were before.

People of this stamp, possessed of a pride, (misnamed zeal) which cannot brook contradiction, were forward in giving information to the magistrate on those whom they called heretics, and in prompting him, where there appeared a remissness, to inflict the punishments which the imperial edicts had denounced. To such are these words of Hilary very pertinently addressed: *Misereri licet nostræ ætatis laborem, et præsentium temporum stultas opiniones congemiscere, quibus patrocinari Deo humana creduntur, et ad tuendam Christi ecclesiam ambitione seculari labo-*

ratur. Oro vos, episcopi, quibusnam suffragiis ad prædicandum evangelium apostoli usi sunt? Quibus adjuti potestatibus Christum prædicaverunt, gentasque fere omnes ex idolis ad Deum transtulerunt? Anne aliquam sibi assumebant e palatio dignitatem, hymnum Deo in carcere inter catenas et flagella cantantes? Edictisque regis Paulus Christo ecclesiam congregabat? Neron ese, credo, aut Vespasiano patrocinantibus, tuebatur, quorum in nos odiis confessio divinæ prædicationis effloruit? At nunc, proh dolor! divinam fidem suffragia terrena commendant inopsque virtutis suæ Christus, dum ambitio nomini suo conciliatur, arguitur. Terret exiliis et carceribus ecclesia, credique sibi cogit, quæ exiliis et carceribus credita est; pendet a dignatione communicantium, quæ persequentium est consecrata terrore; fugat sacerdotes, quæ fugatis est sacerdotibus propagata, diligi sese gloriatur a mundo, quæ Christi esse non potuit. nisi mundus eam odisset. Such were the sentiments of St. Hilary, for he has obtained a place in the calendar, which I take notice of the rather, that we may perceive, in the stronger light, the different temperaments which prevailed in the saints acknowledged by Rome who belong to different ages. Light and darkness are not more opposite than the spirit of a St. Hilary, in the fourth century, and the spirit of a St. Dominic, the inventor of the inquisition, and the butcher of the Albigenses, in the thirteenth. But this by the way. I return to the early times.

It happened, not often at first, that on account of sedition, real or pretended, the person accused of heresy was punished capitally. This, if people were not satisfied of the reality of the sedition, rarely failed, for some ages, to raise against the informers, especially if pastors, much clamour and scandal. Our Lord's words, *I came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them*, had not yet totally lost their force among Christians. The spirit of the master, and that of the servant, made too glaring a contrast to escape the notice of those who had any knowledge and reflection. Indeed, for several ages, those ministers who thought themselves warranted to call in the secular arm, did not think themselves authorised to proceed so far, as to be aiding in what might affect either life or members. They therefore abstained not only from giving information where there was any

danger of this kind, but from appearing at the secular tribunal in any capacity, unless that of intercessor in behalf of the accused. And this office was not in them, as it is in the clergy of some Romish countries at present, under a disguise of mercy, quite transparent, a downright insult upon misery. But a long tract of time was necessary before matters could be brought to this pass. St. Martin, in France, (another instance of humanity and moderation, even in those whom Rome now adores as saints) excommunicated a bishop in the fifth century, for accusing certain heretics to the usurper Maximus, by whose means he procured their death. That worthy minister declared, that he considered any man as a murderer, who was accessary to the death of another, for being unfortunate enough to be mistaken in his opinions. On this foot, however, things remained till the year 800. It belonged to councils and synods to determine what is heresy, but (except in what relates to church censures) the trial, as well as the punishment of the heretic, was in the magistrate. Neither was the punishment legally capital, unless when the heresy was accompanied with crimes against the state. That this pretence was often made without foundation, by men of an intolerant temper, there is little ground to doubt.

About this time happened what is called the great schism of the east, the breach betwixt the Greek and the Latin churches, since which time, till the destruction of the eastern empire by the Turks, the cause of heresy and schism remained in the Greek churches on the same footing as before. In the west, however, it has undergone immense alterations; insomuch, that the popular sentiments concerning zeal and charity have long stood in direct opposition to those which obtained, and rendered the Christian character so completely amiable, as well as venerable, in the days of the martyrs. Indeed, for some centuries, particularly the eighth, ninth, and tenth, remarkable for nothing so much as the vilest superstition and grossest ignorance, and for insurrections, revolutions, and confusions, every where, heretics and sectaries made but little noise, and were as little minded. With the revival of knowledge, even in its dawn, these also revived. There is no human blessing without some foil. But considering the grossness of the reign-

ing superstition, one might be at a loss to say, whether any new absurdity could be, comparatively, pronounced an evil. Whatever served to rouse men out of their lethargy, seemed to promise good in its consequences.

LECTURE XXVI.

After the year 1100, in consequence of the perpetual jars which had been betwixt the popes and emperors for more than fifty years back, and which still subsisted, and in consequence of the frequent wars and scandals in the Christian world, and the irreligious lives of the clergy, innumerable heretics sprang up, whose heresies (as they are called) were commonly levelled against ecclesiastical authority, the abuse of which was, indeed, so excessive, and so flagrant, as to give but too much weight with every body, to the severest reproaches that could be uttered. All attacks upon received doctrines must ultimately affect the power by which they are established. But when the assault is made directly on that power, the fabric of church authority is in the most imminent danger. The aim of the former is only to make a breach in the wall of the edifice, but that of the latter is an attempt to sap the foundation. As we have seen all along that the darling object of Rome is power, to which every other consideration is made to yield, we may believe that attempts of this kind, would excite a more than ordinary resentment. This, in fact, was the consequence: an unusual degree of rancour in the ecclesiastics, more especially in the pontiff and his minions, mingled itself with their bigotry or mistaken zeal, (for it would be unjust to impute the effect to either cause separately) and produced the many bloody, and till then, unexampled scenes of cruelty, which ensued. The popes, by letter, frequently excited the bishops as well as princes—the bishops instigated the magistrates, by all possible means, to subdue or exterminate the enemies of the church. When the number of these enemies was so great, that it was impossible to attain this end by means of judicatories, civil or ecclesiastical, princes were enjoined, on pain of excommunication, interdict, deprivation, &c. to make war upon them, and extirpate them by fire and sword. And in order to allure, by rewards, as well as

terrify by punishments, the same indulgences and privileges were bestowed on them who engaged in those holy battles, and with equal reason, as had been bestowed on the crusaders, who fought for the recovery of the holy sepulchre against the Saracens in the east.

It was not till the year 1200 that the names *inquisition* into heresy, and *inquisitor*, were heard of. The bishops and their vicars being, in the pope's apprehension, neither so fit nor so diligent as he desired and thought necessary in such a cause, there were, at that time, opportunely for his purpose, two new orders of regulars instituted, those of St. Dominic, and those of St. Francis, both zealously devoted to the church, and men with whom the advancement of Christianity, and the exaltation of the pontifical power, were terms perfectly synonymous. To St. Dominic, indeed, the honour of first suggesting the erection of this extraordinary court, the inquisition, is commonly ascribed. It was not, however, in the beginning, on the same footing on which it has been settled since, and still continues. The first inquisitors were vested with a double capacity, not very happily conjoined in the same persons; one was, that of preachers, to convince the heretics by argument; the other, that of prosecutors, to instigate magistrates, without intermission, to employ every possible method of extirpating the contumacious, that is, all such as were unreasonable enough not to be convinced by the profound reasonings of those merciless fanatics and wretched sophisters. I may add a third, that of being spies of Rome, on the bishops, on the secular powers, and on the people, both Romish and heretical. They had it in charge to make strict inquiry, and report to his holiness the number and quality of the heretics, the zeal discovered in those called catholics, the diligence of the bishops, and the forwardness or backwardness, which they found in the secular powers, to comply with the desires of the pope. It was from this part of their charge in particular, that they were denominated inquisitors. They had, however, no tribunals. Only they stirred up judges to banish, or otherwise chastise those heretics, whom they brought before them. Sometimes they excited potentates to arm their subjects against them; at other times they addressed themselves to the mob, and inflamed the populace whom they

headed, to arm themselves, and join together in extirpating them. For this purpose they put a cross of cloth upon the garments of those who were willing to devote themselves to this service, and titled them crusaders. This badge (for a badge in such cases is of great consequence, it matters little what it be, whether a red cross, or a blue cockade) operated like a charm on those holy idiots, (pardon the misapplication of the epithet *holy* in conformity to the style of the barbarians spoken of) and gave the finishing stroke to their delusion. If they were inflamed before, they now became infuriate, and raised to a supercelestial sort of virtue, which defies all the humbler restraints of reason and humanity. In this way things continued till the year 1250, that is, for half a century.

The attempts of the fathers inquisitors during that period were greatly aided by the emperor Frederic II., who, in the year 1224, being in Padua, had promulgated four edicts in relation to this matter, taking the inquisitors under his protection, imposing on obstinate heretics the punishment of fire, and perpetual imprisonment on the penitent, committing the cognizance of the crime to the ecclesiastical, and the condemnation of the criminal, to the secular judges. This was the first law which made heresy capital. This, however, at first, by reason of the circumstances of the times, and the differences which soon arose betwixt the pope and the emperor, had not all the effect that might have been expected from it. However, it proved very pernicious in example, in denouncing against heresy the punishment of death, to which, before that time, it had never been by law subjected. The example was, besides, of a most cruel death; which, nevertheless, came gradually to be adopted, almost universally, into the laws of other countries.

After the death of Frederic, which happened about the middle of the century, pope Innocent IV. remaining, as it were, sole arbiter of affairs in Lombardy, and some other parts of Italy, applied his mind to the extirpation of heresies, which, during the late troubles in the state, had increased exceedingly. And, considering the labour which had hitherto been employed in this service, by the Franciscan friars, as well as the Dominican, whose zeal and diligence, unrestrained by either the respect of persons, or the fear of dangers, by any regards to justice, or

feelings of humanity, recommended them highly to the pontiff; he judged it the surest remedy, to avail himself of their ardour and abilities, not as formerly, in preaching, or even enlisting crusaders, and inflicting military execution, but by erecting them into a standing tribunal, with very extensive authority, and no other charge than that of the expurgation of heretical pravity.

There were two objections against this expedient. One was, that this judicatory appeared an incroachment on the jurisdiction of the ordinary, or bishop of the place; the other was, that it was unprecedented, that the secular magistrate, to whom the punishment of heretics was committed, should be excluded from the trial and judgment. All the imperial laws hitherto, even the last severe law of Frederic, and the municipal statutes of every country, had put the cognizance of the fact, and the trial of the accused, though not the description of the crime, into the hands of the magistrate. For removing the first difficulty, the pope devised this temperament: he made the tribunal consist of the inquisitor, and the bishop of the place; wherein, however, the inquisitor was not only to be principal, but, in effect, every thing, the bishop having little more than the name of a judge. For removing the second, and in order to give some appearance of authority to the secular powers, they were allowed to appoint the officers to the inquisition, but still with the approbation of the inquisitors, and to send with the inquisitor, when he should go into the country, one of their assessors, whom the inquisitors should choose. A third part of the confiscations was to go to the community, in return for which the community was to be at all the expence of keeping the prisons, supporting the prisoners, &c. These things made the magistrate, in appearance, coordinate with the inquisitor, but, in reality, his servant. The infliction of the legal punishment was also in the magistrate, after the heretic had been tried and condemned by the inquisitors. But this was so much a thing of course, and which he well knew he could not avoid executing, without incurring the vengeance of the church, that in this he was, in fact, no better than the spiritual judge's executioner. His office was, in no respect, magisterial, it was merely servile.

On this footing the inquisition was erected in the year 1251, in those provinces in Italy most under the pope's eye, Romania,

Lombardy, Marca Trevigiana, and entrusted to Dominican friars. Afterwards it was extended to more distant provinces. Thirty-one rules, or articles, defining the powers and jurisdiction, and regulating the procedure of this new judicatory, were devised; and all rulers and magistrates were commanded, by a bull issued for the purpose, to give, under pain of excommunication and interdicts, punctual obedience, and every possible assistance to this holy court. The inquisitors were empowered to fulminate against the refractory.

Afterwards, in the year 1484, king Ferdinand the catholic, having put a period to the reign of the Mahometans in Granada, did, to purge his own, and his consort Elizabeth's dominions, from both Moors and Jews, erect, with consent of pope Sextus IV., a tribunal of inquisition in all the kingdoms possessed by him, which took cognizance not only of judaism and mahometism, but also of heresy and witchcraft. The form of the judicatory then introduced, and still remaining there is, that the king nominates an ecclesiastic to be general inquisitor for all his dominions, and his holiness confirms him, if he approve the choice; for he may reject him if he please. The inquisitor named by the king, and confirmed by the pontiff, names the particular inquisitors destined for every place, who, before entering on their office, must obtain the royal approbation. The king, besides, deputes a council, or senate, over this business, who sit where the court resides, and of which the inquisitor general is president. This council has supreme jurisdiction, makes new regulations when it sees occasion, determines differences between particular inquisitors, punishes the faults of their officers, and receives appeals. From Spain it extended to its dependencies, and was introduced into Sicily, Sardinia, and the Indies.

Attempts, however, of this kind have not proved equally successful in all Roman Catholic states, or even the greater part of them. It was never in the power of the pope to obtain the establishment of this tribunal in many of the most populous countries in subjection to the see of Rome. In some it was introduced, and soon after expelled, in such a manner as effectually to preclude a renewal of the attempt. The difficulties arose from two causes: one was, the conduct of the inquisitors, and

their immoderate severity, as well as their unbounded extortion and avarice, to which I may add, the propensity they showed, on every occasion, to extend, beyond measure, their own authority; insomuch, that they were proceeding to engross, on one pretext or other, all the criminal jurisdiction of the magistrate. Under heresy, they insisted that *infidelity*, *blasphemy*, *perjury*, *sorcery*, *poisoning*, *bigamy*, *usury*, were comprehended. The other cause was, that the tribunal was found to be so burdensome, that the community refused to be at the expence. In several places it was found necessary to ease the public of this charge, and in order to abate somewhat of the excessive rigour, which had raised so much clamour against it, a greater share of the power was given to the bishop. These things served to facilitate its introduction into Tuscany and Arragon, and even into some cities of France; but in this last country it was not long permitted to remain.

It is not entirely on the same footing in the different places where it has been received. In Spain and Portugal this scourge and disgrace of humanity glares, monster like, with its most frightful aspect. In Rome it is much more tolerable. Papal avarice has served to counterbalance papal tyranny, and, in defect of a better principle, produced what, if it do not deserve the name, has some of the good consequences of moderation. The wealth of modern Rome arises very much from the constant resort of strangers of all countries and denominations, and, for the most part, of the higher ranks. Nothing would prove a more effectual check to that resort, and, consequently, to the unceasing influx of riches into that capital, than such a horrid tribunal as those which, from Lisbon and Madrid, diffuse a terror which is felt in the utmost confines of those miserable kingdoms. In Venice it is, indeed, as moderate as it is possible for a judicatory to be, which is founded on a principle not more false than tyrannical, that men are responsible for their opinions to any human tribunal. But the particular constitution of that court was settled by an express stipulation between the pontiff and the state. The Venetian senate would not admit an inquisition into their dominions on any other terms, than such as secured at least some regard to justice and humanity in their proceedings, and prevented them from extending their jurisdic-

tion beyond the original limits, or arriving at an independency on the secular powers. With so much caution and jealousy did that wise aristocracy guard against the incroachment of the church.

It is no more than doing justice to many Roman Catholic states to acknowledge, that they are almost as much enemies to that infernal tribunal, as even protestants themselves. Nor can I in this be justly accused of advancing any thing rashly: the tumults which the attempts to introduce it into some parts of Italy, Milan and Naples in particular, and afterwards into France, and other countries called catholic, and its actual expulsion from some places, when, to appearance, settled, are the strongest evidences of the general sentiments of the people concerning it. It is only to be regretted, that those who, in this matter, think as we do, should be inconsistent enough to imagine, that a despotism, which required for its support such diabolical engines, could, with any propriety, be said to come from God. But so far have those called Christians departed from the simplicity that is in Christ, that they will admit any rule for judging of the title of prophets, or teachers, in divine things, rather than the rule given by him whom they call Master. *By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles?* No test of a divine mission, if Jesus Christ may be credited, is of any significance without this.

It may not be improper to conclude our account of the origin of the inquisition, with a few things in illustration of the spirit in which it proceeds, that every one may have it in his power to judge, whether the relation it bears to the spirit of Christ be denominated more properly resemblance, or contrariety. It is so far from following the rules of almost all other tribunals, where any regard is shown to equity, or the rights of human nature, that, in every respect, where the ecclesiastic power has not been checked by the secular, those rules have been reversed. The account is entirely just, as far as it goes, which is given by Voltaire of the Spanish inquisition, and he might have added, of the Portuguese, for both are on the same model. "Their "form of proceeding is an infallible way to destroy whomsoever "the inquisitors please." And let it be observed, that they have strong motives for destroying a rich culprit, as their sen-

tence of condemnation is followed by the confiscation of all his estate, real and personal, of which two-thirds go to the church, and one-third to the state; so that it may be said, with the strictest propriety, that the judges themselves are parties, having a personal interest in the issue against the prisoner. "The "prisoners are not confronted with the accuser or informer." Nay, they are not so much as told who it is that informs. His name is kept secret to encourage the trade of informing. And, surely, a better expedient could not have been devised for promoting this dark business, than by thus securing at once concealment and gratification, with impunity, to private malice, envy, and revenge. Further, "there is no informer, or witness, who "is not listened to. A public convict, a notorious malefactor, "an infamous person, a common prostitute, a child, are in the "holy office, though no where else, creditable accusers and witnesses. Even the son may depose against his father, the "wife against her husband." The detection of the grossest prevarication in the delator and witnesses is hardly ever punished, unless with a very gentle rebuke; let it be observed, by the way, that to the profligate and abandoned they can be very gentle, for they dread, above all things, to do aught that might discourage informers, spies, and witnesses. And that there may be no risk of a want of information, they have, in all parts of the kingdom, spies of all different qualities, who are denominated the familiars of the holy office, a place of which even men of high rank are sometimes ambitious, from different motives, some for the greater personal security, others because it empowers them to take a severe revenge on their enemies, and others, no doubt, because they think they do God good service. The wretched prisoner is no more made acquainted with his crime than with his accuser. His being told the one, might possibly lead him to guess the other. To avoid this, he is compelled, by tedious confinement, in a noisome dungeon, where he never sees a face but the jailor's, and is not permitted the use either of books, or of pen and ink, or, when confinement does not succeed, he is compelled, by a train of the most excruciating tortures, "to inform against himself; to divine and to confess the crime "laid to his charge, of which often he is ignorant." An effectual method to bring nine-tenths of mankind to confess any

thing, true or false, which may gratify their tormentors, and put an end to their misery. "This procedure," adds our historian, "unheard of till the institution of this court, makes the whole "kingdom tremble. Suspicion reigns in every breast. Friend-"ship and openness are at an end. The brother dreads his bro-"ther, the father his son. Hence taciturnity is become the "characteristic of a nation endued with all the vivacity natural to "the inhabitants of a warm and fruitful climate. To this tribu-"nal we must likewise impute that profound ignorance of sound "philosophy, in which Spain lies buried, whilst Germany, Eng-"land, France, and even Italy, have discovered so many truths, "and enlarged the sphere of our knowledge. Never is hu-"man nature so debased, as where ignorance is armed with "power."

In regard to the extent of power given to inquisitors by papal bulls, and generally admitted by the secular authority in those countries where the inquisition is established, I shall give the few following instances out of many that might be produced. First, it is ordered, that the convicts be burnt alive, and in public; and that all they have be confiscated: all princes and rulers who refuse their concurrence in executing these and the other sentences authorised by the church, shall be brought under censure, that is, anathematized and excommunicated, their states or kingdoms laid under an interdict, &c. The house also, in which the heretic is apprehended must be razed to the ground, even though it be not his, but the property of a person totally unsuspected. This ferocious kind of barbarity, so utterly irreconcileable to all the principles of equity, is, nevertheless, extremely politic, as it is a powerful means of raising horror in the ignorant populace, and of increasing the awe of this tribunal in men of all denominations, who must consider it as extremely dangerous to have the smallest connection with any person suspected of heresy, or so much as to admit him into their houses. The inquisitors are also empowered to demand of any person whom they suspect, (and, for their suspicions, they are not obliged to give a reason,) that he solemnly adjure heretical opinions, and even give pecuniary security that he shall continue a good catholic. The court of inquisition are also privileged to have their own guards, and are authorised to give licenses to others to

carry arms, and to enlist crusaders. One of Paul the IVth's bulls does not allow a reprieve from the sentence to one who, on the first conviction, recants his opinion, if the heresy be in any of the five articles mentioned in that bull. But what is, if possible, still more intolerable, is, that, by a bull of Pius the Vth, no sentence in favour of the accused shall be held a final acquittal, though pronounced after canonical purgation; but the holy office shall have it in their power, though no new evidence or presumption has appeared, to re-commence the trial, on the very same grounds they had examined formerly. This ordinance ensures to the wretch, who has been once accused, a course of terror and torment for life, from which no discovery of innocence, though clear as day, no judgment of the court can release him. Another bull of the same pontiff ordains, that whoever shall behave injuriously, or so much as threaten a notary, or other servant of the inquisition, or a witness examined in the court, shall, beside excommunication, be held guilty of high treason, be punished capitally, his goods confiscated, his children rendered infamous, and incapable of succeeding to any body by testament. Every one is subjected to the same punishment, who makes an escape out of the prison of the office, or who attempts, though unsuccessfully, to make it; and whoever favours or intercedes for any such. In these clauses, persons of the highest rank, even princes, are comprehended.

Every one must be sensible, that there is something in the constitution of this tribunal so monstrously unjust, so exorbitantly cruel, that it is matter of astonishment, that in any country, the people, as well as the secular powers, would not rather have encountered any danger, than have submitted to receive it. Nor can there be a stronger evidence of the brutish ignorance, as well as gross depravity of any nation, than that such a judicatory has an establishment among them. The exorbitance of their power, as well as the pernicious tendency of their rules, are, in effect, acknowledged by their superiors at Rome. In a directory printed there, by authority, in 1584, it is said expressly, that if the inquisitors were resolved to exercise their power in its utmost extent, they could, with facility, drive the whole people into rebellion. Now if the power be so excessive and so hazardous, what shall we say to this additional circum-

stance that attends it, that it is, in several instances, so ill defined, as to furnish a pretext to him who is possessed of it, whenever his ambition or inclination leads him, of stretching it to any extent. This, indeed, may be said to be consequent on all exorbitant power. Though all the power of a state or nation be not formally given to one particular branch or member, if so much is given to it, that what remains is too weak to serve as a controul upon it, the whole is virtually given to it. And if, in Spain and Portugal, the ecclesiastical power has not swallowed up the secular, and thereby engrossed the whole authority, they are more indebted to the light which has been diffused through the rest of Europe, in these latter centuries, and the jealousy of the other European states, than to any remains of either sense or virtue in those nations themselves. It must be attended to, that the ecclesiastic power, in every country, which acknowledges the pope, is but a branch of a foreign jurisdiction, namely, that of Rome. Now it is the interest of the secular powers, in every kingdom and state, to take care that the foreign power, the papal, (absurdly called *the spiritual*) do not quite overwhelm the temporal, either among themselves, or in any other kingdom or state. For if it should in any country, there would be ground to dread, that with such acquisitions it might gradually prove an overmatch for the civil powers in every other. Now this is a danger to which popish countries are much more exposed than protestant. In the former, Rome is already possessed of a considerable share of jurisdiction, and has great influence on the minds of the people; whereas, in the latter, she has neither jurisdiction nor influence; and, consequently, could have no hold for effecting a revolution in her favour. With these she could do nothing but by invasion and conquest, for which, with all her advantages, she is very ill furnished. That Spain and Portugal, therefore, as civil powers, are of any weight in the balance of Europe, they owe more to the discernment, the vigilance, and the virtue of others, than to their own.

From what has been said, we may remark by the way, the injustice there is in so connecting, or associating, the Romish religion with the inquisition, as to conclude, that, to be a Romanist, and to be a friend to that tribunal, denote one and the

same thing. The case is so far otherwise, that we are, on the best grounds, warranted to affirm, that nine-tenths of that communion detest the inquisition as much as we do. And of this the most irrefragable evidences have been given in France, in Germany, and even in Italy itself. How they should have the inconsistency, notwithstanding this, to acknowledge a power as from God, which has found it necessary to recur to expedients so manifestly from hell, so subversive of every principle of sound morality and religion, can be regarded only as one of those contradictions, for which human characters, both in individuals and in nations, are often so remarkable. That the policy of Rome bears the marks, not of the wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; but of that which flows from a very different source, and is earthly, sensual, devilish, is so manifest, that the person who needs to be convinced of it, seems to be beyond the power of argument and reason.

Upon the whole, how amazingly different, nay, how perfectly opposite, in disposition, in maxims, and in effects, are the spirit of primitive Christianity, and the spirit of modern Rome? Let any considerate and ingenuous mind impartially examine and say, Are heaven and hell, Christ and Belial, more adverse than the pictures I have, in this discourse, and the preceding, exhibited to your view? Let it be observed also, that these are not caricatures drawn by enemies, but the genuine features, as exhibited in the works of their own authors.

LECTURE XXVII.

I HAVE now given you some account of the rise and progress of the spirit of persecution in the church, and have particularly traced the origin, and unfolded the constitution, of that dreadful tribunal, the inquisition. Ye must have perceived, that in every thing which relates to the procedure of that court, there is an unrelenting barbarity, which bids defiance to all the principles of justice; and as, in all respects, it is without example in past ages, so I hope it will remain without a parallel in future. The favourers of ecclesiastic tyranny, sensible of the horrid appearance which the rapacity, as well as the ferocity, of this tribunal exhibits, and the very unfavourable conclusion it suggests to the discerning, have put their ingenuity to the rack to devise reasons, or what may pass with their votaries for reasons, in support of it.

According to Fra Paolo, in his account of the inquisition of Venice, amongst other peculiarities of the holy office in that state, which were, I may say, extorted by the secular from the ecclesiastic power, one is, that they do not admit the confiscation of the property of the accused, whether he be present and convicted, or declared contumacious, and condemned in absence: but appoint, that his estate, both real and personal, shall go to his lawful heirs, as though he had died a natural death. He says, very justly, in vindication of this article, that it is always pernicious, to mingle pecuniary matters with what concerns religion, which ought to proceed solely from a view to the glory of God. For when men see, that the zeal of the judges, in consigning heretics to the flames, is the sure means of procuring great acquisitions of worldly pelf, it will be impossible to prevent their being scandalized, or to persuade them, however true, that the service of God was the sole, or even the primary motive. He adds, the court of Rome never ceases, on every oc-

currence, to blame this Venetian ordinance, reckoning, that the moderation enjoined by the most serene republic reproaches the Roman ordinance with excessive severity. That, says he, which their partisans maintain in public in defence of their own practice is, that heresy is treason against the divine Majesty, which it is proper to avenge more severely than treason committed against a human creature; and that therefore it is a perversion of order, when he who offends man receives a greater punishment, than he who offends God. Now treason against man is punished with the confiscation of goods; much more then ought treason against God, a crime always incurred by heresy, to be so punished.

I shall give you this author's answer, rendered literally from his own words, in a work written in Italian, published at Venice, a Roman Catholic state, and composed by order of the Doge, the chief magistrate of the republic, to whom it is dedicated. And I desire you farther to take notice, that the author is not only a Roman Catholic, but a priest, nay, a friar. When this is considered, you will be surprised much more at what he controverts with the advocates of papal despotism, than at what he yields to them. "This argument," says he, "more "specious than solid, is as a shadow without a body. For it "would condemn their own constitutions, which pardon heresy, "the first time, upon being recanted: whereas treason against "the sovereign is not, on any terms, pardoned even the first "time; whence it would follow, that by their own reasoning, "they make less account of offending God than of offending "man. But the truth is, that in imposing punishments, re-"spect is had not solely to the heinousness of the transgression, "but to the attendant circumstances of the injury done to "others, of the baseness wherewith the action was accompanied, "or of the malignity of disposition shown by it. Royal ma-"jesty is not injured, unless through the evident malice and "intention of the offender, whereas heresy is commonly the ef-"fect of ignorance. Hence this almost always merits compas-"sion, that never. Penalties are intended more for an exam-"ple to others, than for the chastisement of the delinquent. "The confiscation of goods for treason terrifies others, who are "restrained, through love to their offspring, preferring their

"interest to the gratification of those passions, which instigate "them against the prince. But in the case of heresy, every "one conceives himself incited by spiritual motives, to which "all regards to family ought to be postponed. The event de-"monstrates, that through divine grace, this most happy state "of Venice, whose clemency gives great and universal satisfac-"tion, remains as free from the tares of heresy, without pillag-"ing any man, as other states where this pillage is made with "the utmost rigour. Wherefore, without regard to the rules, "examples, or reflections of others, it is proper for us to pre-"serve those usages, of whose utility we are ascertained by ex-"perience."

Thus far our author. He admits the argument used by Rome to be specious. And so it is, doubtless, to a Roman Catholic. It falls in with his earliest and most rooted prejudices, and suits the mode of reasoning, to which he has been habituated from his infancy. To a judicious and consistent protestant, it is a palpable sophism, and has as little speciousness as solidity. It is, in effect, the same argument, of which I showed the futility in a former discourse, with only the change of the term. There the misapplication was of the word *blasphemy*; here it is of the word *treason*. The abuse of the term is, in this instance, if possible, still more flagrant than in the other. In *treason* there is always a malicious design against the life or crown of the sovereign; there is nothing analogous to this in what they call *heresy*. On the contrary, the principal inducement with the alleged heretic, to bear his suffering patiently, is an opinion (which, whether true or false, is genuinely his opinion) that he thereby honours God, does his duty, and discharges his conscience. What they call *obstinacy*, he cannot avoid considering as *perseverance* and Christian *fortitude*, both of which are incumbent, and very important duties. A retractation not produced by conviction, but extorted by terror, for himself and his children, he does and must consider, as a real defection from God, a betraying of the rights of conscience, and of the interests of truth, as the vilest hypocrisy and impiety. Nay, it cannot be considered otherwise even by his tormentors themselves, who are always ready to acknowledge the guilt of a false confession, (to which they are doing their utmost to bring

the prisoner). At the same time, I acknowledge, that there is a sort of treason in heresy; but it is not treason against God, nor is it treason against the state, but it is treason against the priesthood; for whatever calls its infallibility in question, as an avowed difference in religious opinions undoubtedly does, is an attack upon the hierarchy, and, consequently, subversive of the more than royal pretensions of church authority. This is the true source of that rancour and virulence, with which this imaginary crime has been persecuted by popes and ecclesiastics, and by none more than by those, whose whole lives bore witness, that they regarded no more the principles than the precepts of that religion, for which they seemed to be inflamed with a zeal so violent.

I shall only add on this subject, that if there were no other article, (as there are more than fifty,) we should have here sufficient ground for confuting those bold pretensions to constancy and uniformity in religious sentiments, in what is called the catholic church, with which the bishop of Meaux introduces his history of the variations of protestants [*a*]. Opinions, on the subject I have been treating, more opposite to those held universally by Christians of the first three centuries, than those openly avowed by the Romish church in later ages, and strenuously supported by her rulers, it would be impossible to conceive. But of this I have given sufficient evidence in the two preceding discourses. The difference is, indeed, great in this respect, between Romanists of the two last ages and Christians of the fourth and fifth; but in these there cannot be said to be a direct contrariety. Changes of this kind are always gradual. In regard to the present century, there are some evident symptoms, that even in Roman Catholic countries, the tide of opinion on these articles begins to turn, and that their notions are becoming daily more favourable to right reason, justice, and humanity. Every sincere protestant will rejoice in the change. But how much, on the other hand, will it prove to such, a subject of heart-felt sorrow, when he sees, in any protestant nation, (as sometimes undeniably happens, and of which we had some terrible examples in this very island, no farther back than the years seventeen hundred and seventy-nine, and eighty) a

[*a*] See the Preface to that Work.

strong propensity to those very principles, which are the surest badge of spiritual tyranny, and have long remained the distinguishing disgrace of Roman usurpation.

I have now illustrated, with as much brevity as the subject would admit, Rome's three great engines for promoting catholic ignorance, and preventing every acquisition in knowledge which might prove subversive of her high pretensions; first, the concealment of scripture from the people, and even of the import of the forms of public worship, by the daily use of a dead language; secondly, the prohibition, under the severest penalties, of every thing which might serve to enlighten, and undeceive the world; and thirdly, their system of persecution. The first two were chiefly calculated for preventing all intercourse with that most formidable enemy of superstition, knowledge; the third, intended principally for checking its progress wherever it appears to have made any advances; and that both by silencing all who had ventured to listen to her dictates; and, by deterring others from the imitation of those over-curious enquirers, who are not satisfied to see with other men's eyes, and hear with other men's ears, but would have more light and information on the most interesting of all subjects, than their ghostly fathers think their organs capable of bearing.

The second expedient, however, is of a later date than the other two; for, though there were prohibitions of books some centuries before the reformation, they were very general, and related only to the books of those who had been, by the church, declared heretics. It was not till after the invention of printing, nay, and after the reformation, that the *indices expurgatorii* were devised. These have improved this engine, by giving it all the perfection whereof it is susceptible. If they had timely thought of smothering the art of printing in its infancy, which was about the middle of the fifteenth century, I believe this preventive device, as it was simpler, would have been more easily executed, and more effectual, than that corrective expedient of the *index*, which was adopted afterwards. *Simpler*, because preventive, doing the business at once; whereas, the corrective method stands incessantly in need of additions made to it, on account of the many volumes which are annually, in all parts of Europe, issuing from the press; and which, from the

easy intercourse that now obtains between different, and even distant, nations, are quickly circulated through the whole. It might also have been more easily executed; for, though there were many of those called heretics then scattered through the world, they were not persons of any rank or influence, nor was there, at that time, any nation in the west which had separated from Rome. And though, as was before observed to you, every state had not admitted the inquisition, the paramount authority of Rome, in spirituals, was acknowledged, and in matters that seemed to regard solely the purity of the faith, very implicitly submitted to by all.

Nay, the ignorance and most absurd prejudices of the age might have been of great service to the ecclesiastics, in securing success to the preventive remedy, if it had but occurred to their reverences, and been attempted in time. There was then not only a strong, and, I may say, an universal, belief in sorcery, and judicial astrology, but the first specimens that were exhibited of the typographical art were, in fact, strongly suspected to be derived from the suggestion of evil spirits. And this itself proved the foundation of a great deal of trouble and persecution to John Faust, the inventor, (whom some of you perhaps will know better by the name of Dr. Faustus.) Nor did his acquittal by the parliament of Paris, when prosecuted before them for magic, remove the suspicions, which the people had entertained concerning him; insomuch, that there was no defect of combustible materials for the ecclesiastic thunders to set on fire, if the matter had been timely attended to. But Mentz, the city where printing was first attempted, lay luckily at a great distance from Rome; in consequence of which, this admirable invention had advanced too far, was grown too considerable, and had gotten too many rich, and great, and learned, patrons, to support it, before an alarm, of sufficient force to destroy it, could be given; whereas, had the attempt at printing been first made in the heart of Italy, where that terrible Argus, the pope and conclave, is ever on the watch, or in Spain, or Portugal, under the eye of a vigilant and able inquisitor, capable of foreseeing the consequences to the empire of ignorance and superstition, there is reason to believe, that the inventor, though in effect a greater benefactor to the human race, than all the

conquerors and heroes that ever existed, one who has done more to enlighten and civilize mankind than even the wisest legislators, had, in reward of his ingenuity, been put to an ignominious and tormenting death, his name branded with indelible infamy, and this most useful and beautiful invention had been stifled in the cradle, and never more heard of. If this had been accomplished, no body can doubt, that it would have been a much more effectual method than the index for answering their purpose; for that would have struck at the root of the evil, whereof this serves only to lop off the branches.

But it pleased providence to bless with success the noble discovery, which has brought learning, formerly inaccessible to all but men of princely fortunes, within the reach of persons in moderate circumstances, and has diffused, almost every where, a knowledge which has proved more baneful to the cause of superstition and tyranny, than any event that has happened since the first promulgation of the gospel. Knowledge had, indeed, been gaining ground for some centuries before, but its progress was slow. This served to accelerate its progress to an inconceivable degree. Light, acquired by one, was quickly diffused every where, and communicated to multitudes. Nor was it only by a wider diffusion, but by occasioning also an immense increase of knowledge, that the discovery of the typographic art proved the source of the changes which were soon after effected. When, by the remarkable facility of communication, learning was brought within the reach of the middle ranks, the dead languages became a very general study. The scriptures were read by most students in the Latin vulgate, and, by a few deeper scholars, in the Greek. The early writers of the church were also read. Reading naturally brought reflection, and occasioned comparison. They could hardly avoid comparing the simplicity, and poverty, and meanness, in respect of worldly circumstances, of our Lord, and his apostles, and most of the primitive saints and martyrs, with the pomp, and splendour, and opulence, of the rulers of the church in their own days. It is said, that a picture which Huss had procured, and exhibited to the people, wherein the entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, riding on an ass, attended by his disciples on foot, in a very homely garb, was contrasted by a procession of the pope and cardinals, in their pontifical habits,

and magnificently mounted on the finest horses, richly caparisoned, and adorned with gold and silver and jewels, did not a little contribute to excite the indignation of spectators against their spiritual lords, as bearing no resemblance to those meek, humble, and unassuming men, from whom they pretended to derive all their high powers and prerogatives.

But the difference, in respect of wealth and worldly grandeur between the predecessors and their pretended successors, would not have had a great effect, had this been the only difference. It was but too evident, that the disparity was not less in disposition and character than in external circumstances. When once the clergy of any note had gotten considerably above the middling ranks of life, and lived not only in ease, but in opulence, and even in splendour, it was but too visible, that, in proportion as they became more rich and powerful, they grew less active and useful. They lived in luxury and idleness, often in the most gross and scandalous vices. As to what were properly the duties of their charge, the instruction of the people, and presiding in the public worship, and sacred offices among them, these were but too commonly considered as a sort of drudgery, very unsuitable to men of their dignity and figure, and were therefore either totally neglected, or devolved on those whose poverty, however ill qualified they were, might induce them, for a living, to undertake the task. At the same time, whatever could be considered as a prerogative, or privilege of the office, whatever could contribute to the augmentation of their riches, or of their power, was contended for with such an earnestness and zeal, as the apostles and primitive martyrs never displayed, unless in support of the faith and religious institution once delivered by their master unto the saints.

Thus every thing had run into extremes among them. The dignified clergy, as they were both wealthy and powerful, were generally lazy, proud, ambitious, envious, vindictive, and sometimes profligate. Those again, on whom the burden of the service was devolved, as they were both needy and dependent, and often ignorant, had a share of the vices, which commonly accompany those circumstances. They were false, mercenary, and servile. How much men were confirmed in the very worst opinions, which had been formed of the order, by the great schism

in the papacy, which lasted about half a century, when the Christian world was divided between two, at first, and afterwards three, rival popes, some nations adhering to one, and others to another, each claiming to be the only true head of the church, and calling every other an usurper, it would be superfluous to remark. It was this division in the popedom, both in the head, and in the members, which, as much as any thing, exposed, in the strongest light the irreligion, the worldly ends, the vile intrigues, and even the infamy, of ecclesiastic leaders. I would not, however, be understood, in the character now given, as meaning to include all, without exception. I know that, even in the worst times, there were, both in the higher and in the lower ranks of clergymen, exceptions of persons, whose characters were irreproachable, and lives exemplary. But what I say regards the generality, or the much greater number, of the clerical body. And for the truth of it, I desire no other vouchers than their own most celebrated historians and writers, men who not only lived and died in the communion of Rome, but also were zealous for preserving her unity, and advancing her honour. It will readily be admitted, as a circumstance of additional weight, that the different kingdoms and states of Europe had, at length, attained a better defined and more settled constitution than formerly; that statesmen had begun to entertain more extensive views of policy, and princes to understand better their own rights and interests. As men's eyes were opened, they saw more clearly the encroachments and usurpations of the priesthood.

This discovery, co-operating with the abhorrence and contempt they entertained of many of the priests themselves, on personal accounts, namely, the neglect or prostitution of the sacred functions, and the dissoluteness of their lives, led them to enquire a little into the foundations of the high powers and privileges which they claimed. This was a subject that would not bear examination. As the great foundations of the hierarchy were in the people's ignorance, superstition, and credulity, when these are removed, the whole fabric falls to pieces.

Now it is remarkable, that in all the heresies which sprang up in the different parts of Europe, since the revival of letters, church power seems to have been the principal object struck at. Whereas, in ancient times, it was only incidentally affected.

This will appear manifest to one who considers the accusations brought against Waldo, of Lyons, or at least his followers, Wicliff of England, Huss of Bohemia, Luther of Germany, and Zuinglius of Switzerland; and compares them with those brought against the heresiarchs of the primitive ages, such as Arius, Pelagius, Nestorius, Eutychius, in none of whom was there any direct or pointed aim against ecclesiastics. In those early times, indeed, church power, far from being grown up to such an enormous pitch as it arrived at afterwards, was but in its non-age; nor were churchmen themselves become obnoxious to universal odium, by their laziness and arrogance, as well as by the immorality of their lives. This difference of circumstances gave a taint to the modern sects, which plainly distinguished them from the ancient, and contributed not a little to the virulence which their disputes excited in their adversaries. The wounds given to these were the deeper, and the more apt to fester, inasmuch as they awaked in their breasts a consciousness, that they were not unmerited. Those antagonists saw but too clearly, that the majority, even of their friends, who would not admit the conclusions drawn by the *reformers*, (as they called themselves, or *heretics*, as their enemies called them) agreed but too much with them in their premises: a reflection which could not fail to gall them exceedingly.

The usurpation and tyranny of ecclesiastical superiors, the ignorance in which they kept the people, were at first almost the only topics. From this they proceeded to censure practical abuses in ceremonies and discipline. The third and last step of their progress was to expose errors in doctrine. In these, indeed, when once they were propounded for discussion to the public, they laid the principal stress of their cause. These they considered as the source of every thing else that was amiss. But it was not with them that they began. The shameful incontinence and debauchery of the clergy were the occasion, that very early and very generally, the canons, which enjoin celibacy, became the subject of offence and clamour. The absurdity of reading the scriptures to the people, and performing the public offices of religion in a language which they do not understand, it required but a small share of knowledge, or rather of reflection and common sense, to enable them to discover,

The manifest inconsistency of the practice, which had been introduced, had gradually spread, and was at last become universal, of administrating the eucharist to the people in one kind only, the bread, (the inconsistency of this I say) with the express words of the institution, recorded in no fewer than four books of scripture; the exorbitant power and immunities, which, through the criminal, as well as weak, indulgence of the secular powers, clergymen had obtained, and of which they made so bad a use, afforded matter of loud and universal outcry.

For some centuries before Luther's days, these, and the like corruptions, had been the subject of complaint and murmur in various places. But, from the time of Wicliff's preaching in England, and sending abroad his sentiments to the world in Latin tracts, which was near a century and a half before the reformation, men's attention was roused to such topics, and people grew bolder every day in speaking out their opinions. What they had ventured only to mutter, as it were, in a whisper before, they did not hesitate to proclaim in the most public manner. Ye know the influence which Wicliff's doctrine had, even in the remote kingdom of Bohemia, and the unhappy fate (I mean to outward appearance) of his two famous disciples, John Huss and Jerom of Prague. I do not say, that in all things they adhered to the opinions of the celebrated English doctor. But as, in what relates to the corruptions of the church, and of the clergy, the exorbitance and abuse of ecclesiastic power, they were evidently his followers; so by his writings and example, they were emboldened to give an open testimony to the truth in their native country, and to seal it with their blood in Constance. This, though it be not considered as the era of the reformation, for it happened about a century before the public remonstrances of Luther, is justly regarded as having paved the way for it. Wicliff had left a seed of reformation in England, which it was not in the power of the combined rulers, both spiritual and temporal, to destroy. The martyrdom of Huss and Jerom by the Romish sanhedrim, at Constance, confederated with the imperial authority basely prostituted in violation of plighted faith, through the accursed casuistry of those bloody and deceitful men, proved, as in primitive times, the means of promoting, and not of obstruct-

ing, the cause. In short, men were now arrived at such a measure of knowledge, as rendered the methods employed to keep their minds in subjection, formerly so successful, perfectly ridiculous. The clergy had lost that veneration and respect from the people, which mere external trappings, and arrogant pretensions, had once been found sufficient to secure to them. Nay, so much were the sentiments of many of the laity changed in regard to those articles, that the spiritual denunciations and curses, (when unaided by the secular arm) which would have made their forefathers tremble, served only to make them smile.

Thus stood matters, in regard to religion, throughout Europe, about the end of the fifteenth, and beginning of the sixteenth, century. Nothing could be more evident to men of discernment, than that Christendom was ripe for a revolution in its ecclesiastical polity, and seemed only to wait for a favourable occasion. Such an occasion, the avarice of pope Leo the tenth, and the impiety, as well as indiscretion, of his ministers and agents, soon furnished. The use that was made of that occasion, and the effects produced by it, I shall briefly consider in my next lecture.

LECTURE XXVIII.

In spite of all the endeavours, so assiduously used by Rome, to shut out the light of the understanding, and to keep men's minds in bondage; in spite of all her affected mysteriousness in religious offices, and even in the lessons she gives publicly from the word of God, by employing a language unknown to the vulgar; in spite of her prohibitions with regard to books, and her inquisitions into heresy; it was impossible for her so to exclude the dawn of truth, now rising on the world, after a long and dreary night of superstition and ignorance, as to prevent the discovery both of the weakness of her empire, and of the badness of the foundation on which it stands. Men were become at length pretty generally disposed to listen to those who declaimed against their spiritual guides, whose faults they could not now avoid perceiving. They no longer entertained for them the blind veneration, wherewith they had formerly been affected. Nay, they seemed to be running fast into the opposite extreme, that of entertaining for their ecclesiastical superiors an immoderate aversion and contempt. The pride, the avarice, the ambition, the laziness, and the sensuality, of the clergy, were never failing topics of satire every where.

If things had not been in this train, when Luther began his public declamations against the validity of indulgences, and other powers, which Rome had usurped over the Christian people, converting their ignorance and brutishness into useful engines for filling her coffers; that great reformer had never been so successful amongst all ranks and degrees of people, as he evidently proved. But as the knowledge and personal experience of the much greater part of his hearers perfectly confirmed the severest of his censures, he found no difficulty in fixing their attention, and in exposing, to the conviction of many, the total want of support from scripture, reason, and antiquity, of the arrogant claims to dominion, which had been

raised by their spiritual guides. It is indeed manifest, that when Luther first assumed the character of reformer, he had no intention, nor even idea, of proceeding so far as he afterwards found himself under a necessity of going. He first struck only at the abuse, which had proved the immediate handle of examining the papal prerogatives. And though from the beginning he did not ascribe to the pope that omnipotence, which has not very decently been attributed to him by the canonists, he was, on the other hand, far from disputing his primacy, or even his supremacy, in any sense short of absolute despotism.

It has often been objected to him, and his followers, under which denomination the Romanists are wont to include all protestants, that he himself appealed to the pope from the judgment of his antagonists, that he declared repeatedly, that he would be determined by his judgment; and yet, when his holiness interposed, and gave judgment on the question in debate, he did not depart, in the smallest circumstance, from the doctrine he had maintained in direct contradiction to that judgment. The truth, I believe, is: When Luther declared his submission to Rome, he spoke sincerely, though unadvisedly; he flattered himself, that the reasons which had influenced his opinion were exceedingly plain, and could not fail to influence the pontiff's, when examined seriously. I do not question, that he was then willing to impute the scandals and abuses committed in preaching the indulgences, more to the instruments employed than to the employer; and persuaded himself, that when the pope should be informed of the whole, he could not avoid being ashamed of the conduct of his agents, and would justify Luther, so far, at least, as either to recal, or to qualify, the powers which had been given in relation to indulgences, and to pronounce no censure on the principles, which, on this subject, had been maintained by that appellant. Perhaps he even thought that, through the superintendency of providence, (for at that time he seems to have entertained no sentiments hostile to the monarchial form of church government) such a scandal would be prevented, as the public justification of a doctrine of the most pernicious tendency, disseminated by many of the monks on this occasion.

But whatever was his opinion in regard to the conduct which would be held by Rome, certain it is, that he was egregiously

disappointed. His doctrine was solemnly anathematized, and condemned by the pope as heretical: he himself was commanded, within a limited time, to recant, on pain of incurring all the censures and punishments denounced against obstinate heretics. Luther then but too plainly perceived, that he had not sufficiently known himself, when he professed such implicit submission to the pope. By his preaching and publications he had involved himself in controversy, and brought a number of adversaries upon him. This set him upon enquiring into the foundations of the received doctrine, and examining the fabric of ecclesiastic dominion which had been erected. Both these he had, before that time, received as submissively as any the most implicit son of the church. Neither of them could bear a critical examination. Of this, the further he went, he had the fuller evidence.

It was not easy for any man, especially a man of so sanguine a temper, and of so great acuteness, to confine himself entirely to those topics, which gave rise to the debate. We must be sensible, it would have been the more difficult, when the humour of his antagonists is duly considered. They argued from principles generally received at the time, and which he thought himself under a necessity either to admit or to deny. This led him to enquire into those principles, and the enquiry often terminated in a detection, as he thought, of their falsehood. He was too honest, and too intrepid, not to avow the discovery, and this always engaged him in a new controversy. The scholastic art of disputation then in vogue, which abounded with subtle, but unmeaning, distinctions, might have given him considerable assistance in eluding the address and malice of his enemies, without explicitly declaring himself on several points, which they had very artfully dragged into the dispute. That this should be their method we cannot be surprised. The more articles of the received doctrine they could, by plausible inference, show his principles to be subversive of, the more they exposed him to popular odium, and embarrassed him for a reply. The success, however, of his preaching, and of his writings, was so far beyond expectation, that he was not discouraged from going as far into every question as his adversaries could desire.

Nay, now that he was led into the discussion, now that Rome

had gone all the lengths which his enemies could desire, now that the rupture was complete, he seemed forward to examine every thing to the bottom. He was no longer desirous of keeping any measures with the ecclesiastical establishment. The whole fabric appeared ruinous: No soundness in the materials of which it had been raised. Rottenness was discernible in every part. In spite of all the arts of his enemies, who to argument were not slow in employing more formidable weapons; in spite of the power, as well as number, of those he had to contend with, his doctrine spread, and gained proselytes every day. Among these were some of high rank and consideration, who were able to protect him, and did protect him, against all the dangers with which he was environed. The influence of his doctrine is not to be judged of barely by the converts which he made. The conversion of so many kingdoms and principalities to his system, though the greatest, was not the only effect of his teaching. It waked men thoroughly out of that profound sleep, in which the understandings of the far greater part lay buried, and roused a spirit of enquiry, that has not been without effect in countries which still continue Roman Catholic, in humanizing the spirit, and bringing even their theologians to extenuate, by refined explanations, not dreamt of in former ages, the absurdities of popery itself.

It has been objected to protestants, that Luther preserved no uniformity, or even consistency, of conduct, with regard to Rome: that he professed the utmost submission to whatever sentence she should pronounce, before it was pronounced, and paid no regard to common decency afterwards; allowed himself to be so much transported by passion and resentment, as to give vent to the grossest scurrilities and abuse; nay, that adopting the very spirit of that power against which he declaimed, he, as it were, erected himself into a counter-pope, retaliated upon the Roman pontiff, by returning excommunication for excommunication, and burning the pope's bulls and decretals, in return for the burning of his books.

Rational protestants do not hesitate to acknowledge both the inconsistency of his conduct, and the violence of his passion. Their faith standeth not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. It pleased God to make men the instruments of effect-

ing the wonderful revolution, which, in the course of his providence, was to be produced. And doubtless, those men are entitled to some honour, on account of the character which they bore, and the virtues which they displayed, as instruments of providence for promoting our good. They served as monitors from God, for rousing our attention to the dangers wherewith we were surrounded, for bringing us to assert the rights of men, and of Christians, of using the reason which God hath given us, in judging for ourselves, in what concerns our highest interest, for time and for eternity. But then, we say, they were sent, not to command us to receive the doctrine of eternal life implicitly from them, but to excite us to search the scriptures, to enquire and decide for ourselves. Their interposition, in offering their sentiments in contradiction to their superiors, could be defended only on the right of private judgment, and on this fundamental tenet, that God, having given us his written word for our rule, had seen no necessity for empowering any man, or number of men, to serve as an infallible interpreter of his will. A character, therefore, which they had declared unnecessary, and which they found no man or society entitled to assume, they could not consistently arrogate to themselves. And if any of them presumed to do so, or acted in such a manner as implied this presumption, they were entitled to no regard from their hearers. Protestants, so far from asserting the infallibility of the reformers, do not affirm that they were inspired. They were admonishers, not dictators. If even of the apostles, who were endowed with the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, and often both spoke and wrote by inspiration, much more of the reformers concerning whom the same things cannot be affirmed, we ought to be followers no further than they were of Christ. They spoke as to wise men—it belonged to the hearers to judge what they said.

It is admitted also as undeniable, that the reformers, who arose about the same time in different places, differed on several articles in the doctrine which they taught. This was particularly the case of Luther and Zuinglius, the two earliest. As long as they confined themselves to the abuses which had, from worldly motives, been introduced into the church, there was a wonderful harmony among them all. The sale of indulgences,

the celibacy of the clergy enforced by canon, the withholding of the eucharistical cup from the people, the religious service in an unknown tongue, the worship paid to images and relics, the invocation of saints and angels, the clerical usurpations of secular power, the rendering of church censures subservient to the avarice and ambition of ecclesiastics, were practical corruptions in worship and discipline, wherein all the reformers were agreed. In these points, and several others such as these, a majority of the people would, I am persuaded, in most Christian countries, have been found to concur.

We ought to consider it as a very strong proof of this, that some of those articles had afforded matter of general complaint for a long time before. Thus the permitting of the clergy to marry, the allowing of the cup to the people, the performing of the religious offices in the language of the country, had afforded matter of application to popes and councils for more than a century back. In regard to the corrupt use so flagrantly made of excommunications and indulgences, the scandal was in a manner universal; nor was there a country, province, or city of note, where there were not frequent murmurs against the exorbitant power and wealth, and the consequent laziness and arrogance, of churchmen. And if their idolatries and superstitious usages did not excite the like general offence, it is more to be ascribed to this consideration, that the knowledge of the scriptures had hardly yet descended to the lower ranks. But we may rest assured of it, that the increase of this knowledge, and the decrease of superstition and idolatry, must have accompanied each other.

When a man enters keenly into controversy on any subject, it is impossible to say (unless he is uncommonly circumspect) how far it may carry him. It generally leads to the discussion of questions little connected with that which began the dispute. In this warfare, a man is so much at the mercy of his antagonist, that if he enter into it with more warmth than circumspection, he will follow his enemy that he may fight him, wheresoever he shall shelter himself; and in this way, both combatants come to be soon off the ground on which the combat began. Exactly such a disputant was Luther. And this may be said, in a great measure, of all who had a leading hand in the reformation. To

conquer the foe, wherever he was, came, ere they were aware, to be more an object to them, than to drive him off the field, and keep possession of it. In consequence of this tendency, they were often diverted from the subject. From plain and practical questions, both parties soon turned aside into the dark recesses of metaphysics, where they quickly bewildered themselves in a labyrinth of words. Such was the unhappy consequence of their dogmatizing on abstruse, not to say unintelligible, points of scholastic theology, wherein it might often admit a doubt, whether the same thing was meant by them under different expressions, or different things under the same expression; nay, sometimes whether either party had any meaning at all to what he said. Though the reformers, and Luther in particular, were far from being deficient in the powers of reasoning, they were men of strong passions, and great ardour of spirit. This rendered them liable to be drawn off from the subject; and, when heated with contradiction, to go such lengths as cool reflection could not justify. We ought to remember, too, that, being ecclesiastics, some of them regulars, they had been inured to all the scholastic quibbles and chicanery in vogue at the time, and from which it was impossible, that, without a miracle, they should entirely emancipate themselves. We ought, also, to make allowances for some theological opinions, with which their minds had been strongly prepossessed, long before they thought of a breach with Rome.

Of this sort of rooted prejudices was the doctrine of the *real presence*, as it was called, with the reformer Luther. This, on the one hand, seems with him to have been a favourite principle, at the same time that, on the other, the hatred he had contracted to Rome, made him that he could not bear to think of agreeing with her almost in any thing. Therefore, though he would have a *real presence* of Christ in the eucharist, it must not be the popish *real presence*. His ingenuity soon devised another. Accordingly, *transubstantiation* was rejected, and *consubstantiation* adopted in its stead. That is, the bread and wine were not transubstantiated, or changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, but the body and blood of Christ were consubstantiated, that is, actually present in, with, and under, the elements of bread and wine, and were therefore literally eaten and drank by the communicants. In no part of Luther's conduct does

he appear so extravagant as in this absurd conceit, as to which I agree with the bishop of Meaux, that it has all the disadvantages which the Romanists, and the Sacramentarians, charge on one another, without having a single advantage that can be claimed by either. It has all the absurdity which the latter charge upon the former, inasmuch as it represents the same body existing in different places at the same time, and inasmuch as it represents a substance existing without its accidents, or under the accidents of another substance, but has not the advantage of simplicity which the Romish doctrine has, in interpreting literally the words, *This is my body.* The expression, on the Lutheran hypothesis, ought to have been, not *This is my body,* but *in, with, and under this, is my body.* For they maintain, that the bread remains unchanged, and is that which is seen, touched, and tasted; but that the body of Christ, the same which he had upon the earth, and has now in heaven, accompanies the bread. It has all the obscurity which the Romanists charge upon the Sacramentarians, nay, a great deal more, inasmuch as the words are to be understood neither according to the letter, nor according to any figure of speech ever heard of before. For, by their account, it is neither literally Christ's body, nor figuratively the sign or symbol of his body; but it is something with which his body is accompanied. Indeed, this novel hypothesis is, in every view, so extravagant, that it is impossible to conceive whence it could have originated, but from the collision, (if I may so express myself) of a strong prejudice in favour of the *real presence,* and a violent inclination to dissent from Rome, as much as possible, on every subject.

The controversies in which this novelty of consubstantiation involved him, not only with the papists, but with the Zuinglians, and other reformers, drew him at last to take refuge in a doctrine, if possible, still more extraordinary, the ubiquity, that is, the omnipresence, and consequently, the immensity, of the body and human nature of Christ: hence they are called *ubiquitarians.* This monstrous hypothesis was imagined to remove all difficulties; as though a less absurdity (if there be degrees in absurdities) could be removed by substituting a greater in its place. But if this did in fact solve the difficulty, in regard to the presence of Christ in the eucharist, it solved it by annihi-

lating the sacrament. For what, I pray, on that hypothesis, were the sacramental elements? They will not call them signs, or figures, for that suits only the language of those whom they denominated sacramentarians. They could not, with the church of Rome, call them the identical body and blood of Christ; for they do not think the elements changed or transubstantiated. They remain as they were. And if they should call them barely accompaniments of the body and blood of Christ, wherein do they raise them above any other kind of food; for according to the ubiquitarian doctrine, the body and blood of Christ being every where, may be justly said to be *in*, *with*, and *under*, every morsel we eat, and every drop of liquor we drink, and every breath we draw. Instead of raising the sacrament, therefore, by this extravagant conception, they destroy the distinction between it and every ordinary meal. Nothing more common, when one attempts to explain what is inexplicable, and to defend what is absurd, than to multiply absurdities, as one advances, and to give one's self every moment more nonsense to explain, and more to defend.

Let it not be imagined, that by these free remarks on that first and most eminent reformer, I mean either to lessen his character, or to depreciate his work. Few, on the contrary, have a greater veneration for the one, or set a higher value on the other. Luther had certainly great qualities and virtues: he had also great faults; but the former much preponderated. His penetration and abilities were considerable. I mean his knowledge, his eloquence, his skill in disputation, and his readiness in finding resources, even in the greatest difficulties. But these are only intellectual talents; he was largely supplied with those active virtues, which are necessary for putting the afore-named qualities to the best account. An unconquerable zeal for what he believed to be truth, constancy in maintaining it, intrepidity in facing danger, an indefatigable industry in employing every opportunity that offered for exposing error and superstition, and defending what he thought the unadulterated religion of Jesus Christ. But his virtues were not without defects. Nay, his great qualities themselves were not untainted with those vices, to which they are thought to bear an affinity. His logical acuteness sometimes degenerated into chicane. But this was the

fault of the age he lived in, and of his education. His zeal, and the warmth of his temper, often betrayed him into an unjustifiable violence. His magnanimity was not untinctured with pride and resentment. His transports of rage, and even his buffooneries, against the pope, did unspeakable injury to his cause with the wiser and more intelligent part of mankind; even with those who desired nothing more ardently, than a reformation from the corruptions which prevailed, and a defence of Christian liberty against the too well established tyranny of ecclesiastical superiors. His perseverance would, perhaps, on some occasions, be more properly termed obstinacy. When he had once publicly supported a tenet, he seemed incapable of lending an impartial ear to any thing advanced in opposition to it. In short, what he did, and what he was, notwithstanding his errors, justly merit our admiration; especially when we consider the times in which, and the people amongst whom he lived; I may add, the kind of education he had obtained.

No true protestant considers him, or any of the reformers, as either apostle or evangelist. It is a fundamental principle with such, to call no man upon the earth *master*, knowing that we have one master, one only infallible teacher, in heaven, who is Christ. All human teachers are no further to be regarded, than they appear, to the best of our judgment, on impartial examination, to be his interpreters, and to speak his words. The right of private judgment, in opposition to all human claims to a dictatorial authority, in matters of faith, is a point so essential to protestantism, that were it to be given up, there would be no possibility of eluding the worst reproaches, with which the Romanist charges the reformation; namely, schism, sedition, heresy, rebellion, and I know not what. But if our Lord, the great author and finisher of the faith, had ever meant that we should receive implicitly its articles from any human authority, he would never have so expressly prohibited our calling any man upon the earth master, καθηγηταί, leader, or guide.

A general dissatisfaction prevailed at the time. By universal acknowledgment, things were not as they ought to be. Abuses and corruptions were on every hand complained of, and a cry for reformation was every where raised. Such men as Luther, at such a time, were well entitled to a fair and patient hearing.

But, on the other hand, the hearers were also entitled to put this honour upon themselves; namely, to receive what was spoken both by them, and by their antagonists, as spoken to wise men, to weigh and judge what was said. We are doubtless, now, when the ferment of disputation is over, in a better situation for judging coolly and equitably of the merits of those extraordinary preachers, than the people who lived in that age. And upon the most deliberate examination, I believe the unprejudiced will admit, that, with all their imperfections, they did unspeakable service to the interests of knowledge, of Christianity, and of human liberty.

Having said so much of their talents and virtues, I shall, with all the deference due to the judgment of my hearers, offer a few things in regard to their defects and blemishes, particularly considered as teachers. The first I shall observe is an unavoidable consequence of the education they had received, and the habits to which they were inured; a sort of metaphysical reasoning, or rather sophistry, the genuine spawn of the scholastic logic, which had for ages been in vogue, and which, in some measure, tainted all their disputes. This led them to dogmatize on every point, and was that which first produced dissension among themselves. As long as they confined their declamation to church tyranny, to the correction of superstitious and idolatrous practices, to those clerical artifices for enhancing power and wealth, which were subversive of sound morality, they concurred harmoniously in every thing; but no sooner did they enter on the endless and unprofitable discussion of abstruse and unedifying questions, of which holy writ has either said nothing, or given no decision, than their harmony was at an end. They subdivided immediately. They alarmed those who were inclined to think favourably of their cause. They made many retreat who had made advances. They supplied their enemies with arms against them, and made enemies of friends; inasmuch as many became enemies one to another. Then arose the distinctions of Lutheran, and Zuinglian, and Calvinist, and Sacramentarian, and Ubiquitarian: the first three as implying not barely the disciples of such particular teachers, but as the partizans of different systems. By this conduct, also, they furnished an argument to the common

enemy, to which I do not find that any sect has yet given a satisfactory reply. "If these nice and abstract questions," said the Romanist, "about which ye make so great a bustle, are "really so essential to salvation, as ye pretend, it is impossible "that the scriptures can be so perspicuous as ye account them, "else ye would never, after a careful examination, entertain "sentiments so opposite in regard to those questions." What made the impropiety of their conduct more flagrant, was, that they did not treat those differences in opinion as matters of small moment, as curious speculations with which the pious and contemplative might amuse themselves, but on which, without affecting their Christian character, persons might think differently. Far otherwise; they treated them as equally fundamental with those which they made the subject of their declamations against the common foe; and were often transported with equal fury against one another, on account of those differences, as they were against him. "Ye all appeal" (said Erasmus, whom they wanted to gain, and who at first appeared favourable, being as much an enemy to superstition and ecclesiastic tyranny as any of them, ye all appeal, said he) "to the pure "word of God, whereof ye think yourselves true interpreters. "Agree then amongst yourselves about its meaning, before ye "pretend to give law to the world." "It is of importance," said Calvin, in a letter to his friend Melancthon, "that no "suspicion of the divisions which are amongst us descend to "future ages; for it is ridiculous beyond imagination, that, "after having broken with all the world, we should, from the "beginning of our reformation, agree so ill amongst ourselves." Indeed, this bad agreement, as it was a great stumbling block in the way of those who inclined to examine the matter to the bottom, so it proved a greater check to the cause of the reformers, than any which the open or the secret assaults of their enemies had yet, either by spiritual weapons, or by carnal, been able to give it.

But unfortunately, (for the truth ought, without respect of persons, to be spoken) they had not sufficiently purged their own minds from the old leaven; they still retained too much of the spirit of that corrupt church which they had left. As they were men, we ought to form a judgment of them not only

with candour, but with all the lenity to which their education, the circumstances of the times, the difficulties they had to surmount, and the adversaries they had to encounter, so justly entitle them. But as they were teachers of religion, we ought to be at least as careful not to allow an excessive veneration for their great and good qualities, to mislead us into a respect for their errors, or to adopt implicitly the system of any one of them; that we must learn not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of us be puffed up for one against another. The spirit of the church, especially that nourished in the cloisters, was a spirit of wrangling and altercation. Never could any thing better suit the unimportant and undeterminable questions there canvassed by the recluses, than the words of the apostle, *vain janglings and oppositions of science falsely so called.* As therefore they had not avoided these, nor taken the apostolical warning, not to dote about questions and strifes of words, they soon experienced in themselves, and in their followers, the truth of the apostolical prediction, that envy, contention, railings, evil surmisings, and perverse disputings, would come of them; but that they would never minister to the edifying of themselves in love; that so far would their disputations be from answering the end, and terminating their differences, that they would incessantly give birth to new questions, and would increase unto more ungodliness. This contentious spirit, derived from the schoolmen, and commonly accompanied with spiritual pride, and a vitiated understanding, did not fail of producing its usual consequences, uncharitableness in judging of others, on account of difference of opinion, and intolerance in the manner of treating them. Of the first of these, the evidences are coeval with the questions, and perfectly unequivocal; and of the last, that is, of the intolerant spirit they had retained of the church they had deserted, it must not be dissembled, that they gave but too manifest proofs as soon as they had power.

Ye will do me the justice to believe me, when I add, that it proceeds not from any pleasure in depreciating, that I have taken so much of the invidious task of exposing the blemishes in those truly meritorious characters. But of men so much exposed to public view, and so highly distinguishable, as were our

reformers from popery, there is a considerable danger on either side in forming a wrong judgment. One is, indeed, that a prejudice against the instruments may endanger our contracting a prejudice against the cause. Of this extreme, in this protestant country, I imagine, we are in little danger. To prevent it, however, their faults ought not to be mentioned without doing justice to their virtues. The other is, lest a prepossession in favour of the cause prove the source of a blind devotion to the instruments. Of this extreme, the danger here is, I think, very great. Nay, though different men's attention, according to their various circumstances, has been fixed on different instruments in the hand of providence, in effecting the wonderful revolution then brought about, yet an immoderate attachment to one, or other, has been, since the beginning, the rock on which the far greater part of protestants have split.

THE END.

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